

Hurdsfield Community Primary School

Hulley Road, Macclesfield, Cheshire SK10 2LW

Inspection dates

26–27 June 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	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- School leaders, including governors, failed to prevent the decline in standards at the school over recent years. As a result, in 2017, pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics was well below the national average at the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2.
- The quality of teaching is inconsistent. In some classes, teachers do not use time effectively or provide enough challenge, and this limits the progress that pupils make.
- The role of subject leaders is not sufficiently well developed to enable them to contribute fully to school improvements.
- The curriculum is too narrow and does not provide pupils with enough opportunities to learn subjects other than English and mathematics in any depth.
- Despite recent improvements in phonics teaching, some pupils do not develop their early reading skills well enough because not all adults who teach them have the necessary subject knowledge.
- Disadvantaged pupils do not make enough progress in their learning and the difference between them and other pupils nationally is not diminishing. Too many of these pupils are regularly absent from school.
- Not enough children make strong progress in the early years. This is because learning tasks that adults provide for them are often not challenging enough.
- The most able pupils are not being regularly challenged in their learning, so too few are achieving as well as they should.

The school has the following strengths

- The new headteacher and chair of governors have a clear understanding of the weaknesses of the school and the urgency with which they need to be addressed. Standards are beginning to rise because of the actions that he has already taken.
- Personal development, behaviour and welfare are good. Pupils are well looked after and feel safe in school.
- Staff, parents and carers and governors are fully supportive of the headteacher and the changes that he has implemented to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding are thorough. They have been improved significantly during this school year.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - governors challenge school leaders effectively and hold them to account for the standards being achieved
 - subject leaders play a key role in monitoring, evaluating and improving standards in their areas of responsibility
 - the curriculum provides pupils with the opportunity to study a wide range of subjects in depth.
- Improve pupils' outcomes and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across the school by ensuring that:
 - teachers make good use of assessment information to plan work that is matched more closely to the learning needs of all pupils, including the most able
 - teachers have good subject knowledge in phonics so that they can support pupils' early reading development more effectively
 - teachers make the best use of the time that they have available in lessons to challenge pupils, particularly those of higher ability, to ensure that they make strong progress
 - teachers in the early years provide more challenging tasks that build more effectively on children's prior learning
 - disadvantaged pupils' attendance improves and few, if any, are persistently absent from school.

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

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Due to ineffective leadership, standards have declined at this school since the previous inspection. Low expectations and weak teaching have resulted in pupils across the school making slow progress. In 2017, the key stage 2 results were below the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The new headteacher has high aspirations for the school. His commitment to improving the quality of education is shared by staff, parents and governors. The actions he has taken, since his appointment in September 2017, have already had a positive impact on the standards being achieved across the school. He has developed comprehensive plans to secure further improvements, as he is aware that weaknesses remain.
- The headteacher has recognised that there are weaknesses in subject leadership. He is working with teachers who lead mathematics and English to build capacity within the leadership team. As a result, subject leadership is becoming more effective and teachers are playing a more active role in monitoring, evaluating and improving standards. The headteacher recognises that further work is required in this area and he has good plans in place to increase leadership capacity further.
- Good systems are in place to check on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. The headteacher regularly observes teaching and has taken strong action to address weaknesses. He meets regularly with subject leaders and class teachers to review pupils' progress and identify where further improvements are needed.
- Staff are fully supportive of the headteacher and support the changes that he has overseen since his appointment. There is a shared understanding among staff of what needs to improve further. All members of staff who responded to the staff survey said that the school is well led and managed and that leaders do all that they can to ensure that the school has a motivated, respected and effective teaching staff.
- There have been recent improvements to the wider curriculum. 'Ignition Days' are now used to introduce new topics every three weeks. Pupils talked enthusiastically to inspectors about these events and how they were making learning more exciting. However, despite the improvements that have been made to the wider curriculum, teachers still do not challenge pupils enough in science, geography and history. Pupils do not yet acquire knowledge, understanding or skills well enough in these subjects.
- Careful planning ensures that regular opportunities are provided for developing pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness and their understanding of British values. Assemblies and a regular whole-school focus on different aspects of British values, such as the rule of law, mutual respect and tolerance, help to ensure that pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Parents' views of the improvements made by leadership are very positive. All of those who responded to Parent View said that their children are happy at school, and an overwhelming majority would recommend the school to others. One parent wrote, 'My children love every day. They've made good friends and have positive relationships with the adults at the school.'

- The local authority is taking firm and effective action to secure improvements. It has commissioned good-quality support from successful local schools and is monitoring the school's progress closely.

Governance of the school

- Since the previous inspection, governors have not been effective in holding school leaders to account for the standards achieved at the school. As a result, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment has deteriorated, and outcomes are not as good as they should be.
- Governors failed to ensure that the pupil premium funding was used effectively. They did not check the impact of this funding closely enough. For example, they were unaware of the high level of persistent absence among disadvantaged pupils.
- Recent changes to the governing body are beginning to have a positive impact. The new governors who have been appointed bring a wide range of skills and abilities to the school. The new chair of governors is fully committed to raising standards, and governors are more involved in the life of the school than in previous years.
- Governors are making good use of external support that has been commissioned by the local authority to develop a better understanding of their role in supporting and challenging the school. An external review of governance has recently been carried out. The progress that the governing body is making in addressing the issues identified is being closely monitored by the local authority.
- Governors help to ensure that the necessary policies and procedures are in place to keep pupils safe. They work with school leaders to audit safeguarding arrangements and make regular visits into school to see for themselves how policies are put into practice.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- There is a strong culture of safeguarding at the school. Staff are up to date with their training and understand their roles and responsibilities regarding safeguarding pupils. As a result, pupils feel safe and secure in school. They say that they are listened to if they have any problems.
- Staff monitor pupils' safety carefully. They keep detailed records so that they can build up a picture of pupils' well-being over time. Any concerns raised about the safety of pupils are followed up and, where necessary, staff make referrals to external agencies.
- Appropriate checks are carried out on all staff who work at the school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching varies too much across the school. There are strengths in key stage 1 and upper key stage 2 but, in too many year groups, teaching is not good enough to ensure that pupils make strong progress.

- There is a legacy of weak phonics teaching at the school, which is reflected in the low standards that have been achieved in reading over recent years. Leaders have overseen some improvements this year and more pupils are now able to decode and read words successfully most of the time. However, not all members of staff who teach phonics have the necessary subject knowledge. This limits the rate of progress of some pupils.
- The quality of teaching in mathematics is inconsistent. In some classes, pupils are challenged to use and apply their knowledge and skills to investigate and solve problems. This improves their understanding of mathematics and they make strong progress. However, in other classes pupils spend too much time completing repetitive work that does not challenge them enough and they make slow progress as a result.
- The school is working successfully to improve pupils' progress in reading. Teachers use class novels to broaden pupils' experience of reading and promote an enthusiasm among pupils for reading more widely. The school's most recent assessments show that the number of pupils achieving or exceeding the expected standard for their age is increasing.
- There has been a strong focus on improving the teaching of writing and this is having a positive impact on standards across all key stages. Leaders have introduced a whole-school approach to planning learning and improving pupils' opportunities to write. Inspectors saw evidence, in pupils' books and on displays around the school, that pupils are now making better progress in developing their writing skills.
- The introduction of 'Ignition Days' has generated much enthusiasm from pupils about their learning across the curriculum. However, the quality of teaching in science, geography and history requires further improvement to ensure that pupils are ready for the next stage in their education when they leave key stage 2.
- Teaching assistants typically provide effective support for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are proud of their school. They talk confidently about their learning and the school's 'only the best will do' values. Pupils' work is regularly celebrated in the high-quality displays around the school.
- Staff provide regular opportunities for pupils to learn about different faiths, customs and traditions. During assemblies, the school also regularly celebrates British values such as tolerance and equality.
- There are positive and warm relationships between adults and pupils. All of the parents who responded to the Parent View survey, and those spoken to during this inspection, stated that their children are happy at the school. Parents also spoke positively about 'Feedback Friday', the weekly opportunity that they are given to visit their child's classroom and find out about what children have been learning.

- Pupils are regularly taught about the importance of staying safe while online or using mobile technology. They have a good understanding of how to manage the risks that these technologies bring.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are polite and friendly towards each other and the adults who teach them. They have good attitudes to learning and were very keen to talk to inspectors about their work during this inspection.
- Pupils told inspectors that behaviour at the school is almost always good and that bullying is extremely rare. They expressed confidence that members of staff would deal with any form of disruptive behaviour and said that there is always a member of staff on hand to offer help should they need it.
- The school is a calm and orderly place. Around the school, and at different times of the day, pupils behave sensibly and look after one another.
- Leaders are taking firm action to improve attendance, which was just below the national average in 2017. They recognise that too many disadvantaged pupils are persistently absent from school and are working more closely with the parents of these pupils to encourage regular attendance.
- All members of staff who responded to the Ofsted survey said that behaviour is good at the school and that leaders support staff well in managing behaviour. Almost all of the parents who responded to Parent View said that the school makes sure that pupils are well behaved.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- The proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics was well below the national average in 2017. This was a result of inconsistent teaching over time. However, the new headteacher has overseen some improvements to the quality of education being provided at the school. As a result, current pupils are making better progress in English and mathematics than in previous years.
- Pupils' achievement in mathematics still requires improvement because, in some classes, pupils spend too much time doing work that does not challenge them enough. This is particularly true of the most able pupils. Although pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 are making strong progress, there are many gaps in their knowledge and understanding of mathematics due to weak teaching in previous years. This prevents pupils from attaining well at the end of key stage 2.
- Pupils enjoy reading and have access to books that are suitably challenging and that appeal to their interests. The pupils who read with inspectors did so with expression and fluency. However, some of the younger pupils do not develop their phonics skills quickly enough and this prevents them from making stronger progress in becoming independent readers.

- Current pupils are making stronger progress in writing. Evidence seen in lessons and in pupils' workbooks confirms the school's own assessment information that the proportion of pupils working at and above age-related expectations is increasing.
- The progress and attainment of disadvantaged pupils remain too low. Too many of these pupils are persistently absent from school, and this limits their achievement.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are generally well supported. The interventions that are provided for these pupils are well matched to their needs. They progress well from their low starting points due to the additional support that they receive.
- The most able pupils do not make enough progress, and this is evident in the school's recent key stage 2 results. Inspectors saw evidence, during this inspection, to suggest that teachers are now challenging these pupils more, but it is too early to see the impact of this improvement.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Most children enter the early years with skills and abilities that are below those typically found. Over the past few years, the progress that children have made during their time in the early years has not been strong enough and the proportion of children achieving a good level of development has been below the national average. Consequently, at the end of the early years not enough children have been as well prepared as they should have been for the next stage in their education.
- Children enjoy school and develop very positive attitudes to learning. They behave well, cooperate with each other and learn to respect each other's differences. They learn how to work independently and many show good levels of concentration when engaged in their learning. They follow school routines well and feel safe at the school.
- Staff make regular observations of children and the activities that they are involved in. They record these observations carefully. However, this information is not used well enough to provide learning opportunities for children that build on their prior learning and help to develop their knowledge and understanding.
- The activities provided for children do not routinely challenge the most able. These children can achieve much more but teaching does not build effectively on their prior learning. This is particularly noticeable in the development of children's writing and phonics skills.
- Disadvantaged children make progress at a similar rate to that of their peers. However, as standards are below average for all children in the early years, the gap between disadvantaged children and others nationally is not diminishing.
- Safeguarding arrangements are effective. Adults ensure that children are well looked after and are vigilant in ensuring children's welfare and safety.
- Adults in the early years have positive relationships with parents. Parents are involved in the initial assessments that are made on the children and are invited into the school on a regular basis to see for themselves how their children are learning.

School details

Unique reference number	111233
Local authority	Cheshire East
Inspection number	10045864

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	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	180
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rachel Mooney
Headteacher	James Cash
Telephone number	01625 383 008
Website	www.hurdsfieldprimaryschool.com
Email address	head@hurdsfield.cheshire.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	29–30 April 2014

Information about this school

- Hurdsfield is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The headteacher joined the school in September 2017.
- There have been several changes to the governing body over the past two years, including a new chair.
- The majority of pupils come from a White British background.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below the national average.
- The school is currently receiving enhanced support from the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for 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 supported with an education, health and care plan, including those with a statement of special educational needs and/or disabilities, is above the national average.
- The school did not meet the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in 2017.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching, learning and assessment across a range of subjects and age groups. Some of these observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of pupils' written work.
- Inspectors observed pupils' conduct at break and lunchtime.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation, including minutes of governors' meetings, development plans, attendance and behaviour data, safeguarding documents and the school's review of its own performance.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, the early years leader and subject leaders for mathematics and English. They also held meetings with members of the governing body, including the chair, and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils to discuss reading, the wider curriculum and behaviour. They also spoke to pupils informally during breaks and dinner times.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read in Year 2 and Year 3.
- One inspector spoke with parents in the playground before school. Inspectors also took account of the 25 responses to Parent View and the 17 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Paul Tomkow, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Michelle Beard

Ofsted Inspector

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