

Hillocks Primary and Nursery School

Unwin Road, Sutton-in-Ashfield, Nottinghamshire NG17 4ND

Inspection dates

2–3 May 2019

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Inadequate

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Senior leaders have not acted with the necessary urgency to improve the school. The school was judged to be inadequate at its previous inspection and remains so.
- Governors and senior leaders have not ensured that all the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection have been addressed fully.
- Leaders have overseen a decline in the early years and have failed to improve the other areas of the school's work sufficiently well.
- Outcomes are not good enough. Too few pupils make the progress that they should or are well prepared for secondary education.
- Senior leaders have not ensured that the school's plans for development are implemented effectively.
- Senior leaders have not ensured that subject leaders have the skills to secure improvements throughout the school. Subject leadership is not consistently effective.
- Governors have not held leaders to account effectively. They have not fulfilled all their statutory responsibilities to ensure that the website includes all the information that it should.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment remains inconsistent. Teachers do not always address pupils' misconceptions or set work that is sufficiently challenging. The teaching of spelling and reading is not consistently good.
- Leaders have begun to put better systems in place to improve attendance. However, persistent absence remains too high.
- Leadership of the early years is not strong enough. Too few children are prepared well for Year 1. Teachers do not use assessment information effectively to plan children's next steps in learning.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils know how to stay safe. They know how to lead healthy lives. The proportion of pupils involved in a wide range of sporting activities is increasing.
- The curriculum provides pupils with opportunities to develop artistic and creative skills.

Full report

In accordance with section 44(2) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - leaders' roles and responsibilities are focused on improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and pupils' outcomes
 - the recent improvements in governance are maintained, so that leaders are held to account for the improvement of the school
 - leaders implement the school's improvement plan effectively, so that actions lead to rapid improvement across all areas of the school's work
 - records of staff safeguarding training are kept and monitored effectively
 - the school's website includes all statutory information.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning for all pupils by ensuring that all teachers:
 - use accurate assessment information to plan tasks that match what pupils need to learn next
 - move pupils on in their learning when they are ready and provide effective challenge
 - identify and address misconceptions
 - provide pupils with strategies to locate and learn the meaning of unfamiliar words
 - improve the teaching of spelling so that pupils can recognise and correct their own errors.
- Improve the quality of early years by:
 - securing effective leadership
 - establishing a consistent approach to teaching and learning
 - ensuring that all adults develop children's communications skills effectively
 - embedding an accurate assessment system so that teachers can plan children's learning and monitor progress
 - improving outcomes for all children so that a greater proportion are better prepared for Year 1.
- Further improve the attendance of pupils by working more effectively with pupils and families to improve attendance rates and reduce persistent absence.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- Senior leaders have not acted with sufficient urgency to address the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. Their evaluation of the effectiveness of the school is not accurate. Significant turbulence in the staffing of the school has weakened leadership and restricted the scope for improving teaching and learning.
- With support from external advisers, leaders have devised plans for improvement. However, senior leaders have been too slow to implement these plans. Plans have been ineffective in developing some aspects of the school, including the early years.
- Leaders have not secured consistently good-quality teaching and learning across the school. They have not ensured that pupils make the progress that they should. Too few pupils leave the school well prepared for secondary education.
- Leaders have not responded quickly enough to the findings of external reviews of governance or the impact of the pupil premium spending for disadvantaged pupils.
- Leaders have not recognised the decline in the quality of teaching and learning in early years. They have not acted with enough urgency to improve outcomes for children.
- Leaders have established a system to monitor the progress that pupils make, but the information it provides is not used effectively. Not all teachers are able to use this information effectively to plan for pupils' next steps in learning. Leaders have been slow to hold teachers to account for the progress pupils make.
- The quality and success of subject leadership varies considerably. In some subjects, leaders have achieved notable improvements. These leaders have developed teachers' subject knowledge and have raised expectations of what pupils can achieve. In areas such as mathematics and science, leaders have provided well-planned professional development. They give well-judged feedback to teachers.
- However, senior leaders have not been effective in developing leadership across the school. In some subjects, senior leaders have not ensured that the actions to bring about improvement are implemented consistently.
- Leaders for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have an accurate knowledge of the support that pupils need. They monitor the additional support pupils receive and the impact this is having on their progress. However, as developments in this area are recent, a small number of pupils have not made secure progress.
- Leaders have begun to monitor the progress that disadvantaged pupils make. However, this is at an early stage. Plans and subsequent actions are not yet sufficiently precise to ensure that pupils are making the best possible progress.
- Leaders are beginning to evaluate the use of the primary physical education (PE) and sports premium. They ensure that all pupils have the opportunity to take part in sporting activities, and participation levels have risen. Pupils enjoy a wide variety of activities, including wheelchair basketball, futsal and netball.
- The curriculum enriches pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. Pupils study the work of contemporary artists as well as more famous pieces. They have well-planned opportunities to learn instruments and develop their appreciation of music.

- Leaders have ensured that pupils learn about different faiths. Visits, such as to The Holocaust Centre, provide pupils with first-hand accounts of survivors. Pupils have a good understanding of British values, such as the need for tolerance and respect for diversity. They can explain how the school's values are important to them and help them to live well together. They accept each other's differences and say that this is what they value about the school.

Governance of the school

- Following the review of governance, there have been many changes to the governing body. However, these improvements have been slow to come about and have not been in place for long enough to have any real effect.
- The chair of the governing body is now establishing more rigorous systems to hold school leaders to account and improve the pace of change. Governors are beginning to evaluate the quality of work undertaken by external partners. They are beginning to challenge leaders more effectively as they seek further improvement for the school.
- As a result of recent visits to the school, governors have more accurate knowledge about some aspects of the school's work. However, this is not yet the case in all areas, for example they have not checked the school's procedures for recording staff safeguarding training.
- Governors have not ensured that the school has met its statutory responsibility to publish key information on the school's website.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Staff know what to do if they have concerns about a pupil. Leaders ensure that these concerns are addressed promptly. Appropriate checks are in place before adults begin to work with pupils. However, leaders have not ensured that records of staff training are kept systematically. Therefore, they cannot be certain that all staff have received the necessary training.
- Parents and carers who spoke with inspectors or responded to the online questionnaire felt that their children are safe in school. Pupils learn how to keep safe when crossing roads or playing outside. They know that information about themselves should not be shared online and how to respond if they receive an inappropriate message electronically. Pupils feel safe in school and say that there is always someone to talk to if they have any worries or concerns.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is not improving quickly enough. Expectations of what pupils can achieve are not high enough. Teachers do not routinely challenge pupils, and sometimes pupils repeat work unnecessarily.
- Teachers' use of assessment information is not always effective. Some teachers do not use their knowledge of what pupils can already do to plan tasks that build and develop

learning. They are sometimes too slow to identify when pupils have not understood something, and so misconceptions remain.

- Teachers sometimes plan activities without sufficient consideration for how the task will develop pupils' learning. For example, in mathematics, pupils sometimes learn a process without understanding the value of the numbers that they are using.
- Pupils do not always receive effective support from teachers to move their learning on. For example, sometimes teachers do not ensure that pupils correct words that they have misspelled. Pupils' knowledge of how to spell common words does not improve.
- Some teachers do not check carefully that pupils can read the books they choose. Sometimes, pupils cannot read these texts sufficiently well to understand the meaning. Pupils lack the strategies to find out the meaning of unfamiliar words.
- When developing early reading skills, most teachers now teach phonics effectively. However, they do not routinely check that all pupils use their knowledge of phonics to read words. The books teachers give pupils are not always well matched to their stage in learning. Pupils do not always know the sounds in words to enable them to read fluently.
- Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to write at length about a range of subjects. For example, pupils in key stage 2 write descriptions about different predators. Older pupils write descriptive letters, imagining that they were in the trenches during the First World War. Some teachers have raised their expectations about presentation and more pupils are beginning to write in a fluent and consistent style. However, these higher expectations are not yet consistent across all classes.
- Teachers have ensured that pupils have more opportunities to practise reasoning in mathematics. Pupils are developing the ability to explain how they have come to an answer and work with increased accuracy.
- Where teachers' subject knowledge is strong, they use this well to develop pupils' knowledge and skills. For example, in music, pupils enjoy building their own phrases using different instruments. In art, pupils gain a secure knowledge of accurate observation and shading techniques and can refine these skills.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils understand that they need to eat a balanced diet. Older pupils can explain the importance of exercise and drinking water regularly. Younger pupils learn about looking after their teeth and brushing them regularly.
- Pupils enjoy residential visits. They learn to become more resilient and independent when they are away from home. Pupils appreciate the wide variety of sporting activities that are available for them to join in and feel that there is a good balance of new activities and competitive challenges.
- Most pupils are keen to learn and improve their work. There are increasingly well-established routines which help pupils to consider what they can make better. There is

some inconsistency in the pride that pupils display in their work; however, this is improving.

- Pupils learn about a variety of faiths. They visit the local church and other places of worship and learn how they can help their community. They can explain similarities between different faiths and what is important to believers.
- Pupils learn about what to do if they are anxious. There are well-established systems in place to provide support to pupils. Pupils say that there is always someone to share concerns with.
- Teachers use real-life situations when teaching about internet safety. For example, teachers encourage pupils to consider what information is safe to include in an online profile and how security settings can keep these profiles secure.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Too many pupils are disadvantaged by being persistently absent from school. Persistent absence is still higher than the national average, including for vulnerable groups. While overall attendance has improved, it is still below the national average. Systems for addressing persistent absence are not yet sufficiently rigorous.
- Where teaching is less effective, some pupils become distracted and disengaged from the learning. Teachers do not always check that all pupils are taking part, and as a result learning slows for these pupils.
- Pupils enjoy creative sessions, such as making music, and respond quickly to teachers' instructions in these sessions.
- Most pupils conduct themselves well around the school. They are generally polite and well mannered. They play happily together during less structured times, such as playtime.
- Pupils who spoke with the inspectors felt that there is little bullying in the school. They say that adults deal with any incidents of poor behaviour quickly. There are few incidents of racist bullying, and leaders ensure that pupils are taught regularly about different types of bullying and how to seek help if needed.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Outcomes for pupils at the end of key stage 2 were broadly average in 2017. However, standards declined in 2018. The proportion of pupils who reached the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics was below the national average. Very few pupils attained the higher standard.
- The proportion of pupils reaching the expected and greater depth standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 1 has remained consistently below the national averages for the last three years.
- The proportion of pupils who have reached the standard of the phonics screening check has been consistently below the national average. The school's assessment information shows that due to recent changes to the teaching of phonics, more pupils

are gaining these early reading skills than in previous years.

- Pupils' workbooks show that some are not making as much progress as they are capable of. While improvements to the teaching of mathematics have enabled pupils to make stronger progress, this is not consistent. Sometimes the most able pupils are not sufficiently challenged.
- As the teaching of reading is not consistent, some pupils are not making strong progress. Teachers' expectations of what pupils should be able to achieve are sometimes not high enough.
- Work in pupils' English books shows that some pupils are making stronger progress than in previous years in writing. However, this is inconsistent across the school. The quality of pupils' writing in their English books is not always the same as their writing in other subjects.
- The school's assessment information and pupils' workbooks show that most disadvantaged pupils are making better progress than they have in the past. However, the gap between their attainment and that of other pupils is not closing in all year groups.
- The school's assessment information and leaders' observations indicate that most pupils with SEND are making strong progress. However, some pupils are still not making as much progress as they are capable of.
- Pupils' workbooks indicate that standards are rising in science. Pupils develop their investigative skills as well as their subject knowledge. They present their work independently.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching and learning in the early years has declined since the last inspection. Leadership of the early years has been turbulent, and leaders have relied on external support to identify areas for improvement. Recent staff development is beginning to have an impact. However, this is still at an early stage.
- Not all staff communicate effectively with children to develop their knowledge and understanding. They do not always encourage children's language development, for example by inviting children to explain their thinking. Talk is not used effectively to develop children's ability to interact or explain their ideas.
- Children are not provided with enough opportunities to explore, investigate and solve problems. There is a lack of challenge, and expectations are not always high enough.
- Some recent staff training has focused on improving the teaching of phonics. Some children are beginning to make stronger progress than at the beginning of the year. However, adults do not check to make sure that children are blending sounds correctly. As a result, some misconceptions are not identified and addressed.
- Additional funding is not always well targeted to support disadvantaged children. Leaders do not always make sure that the impact is clearly identified when deciding how this additional funding should be spent.
- Leaders are setting up a more reliable system to assess what children can already do.

Leaders are beginning to use this to identify areas where children need more help, such as writing. They are beginning to use this knowledge to inform their planning so that they can improve opportunities for children.

- Teachers' assessment information shows that in some areas of learning children are beginning to make better progress than children in previous years. However, the proportion of children who reach a good level of development is consistently below the national average. Too few children are well prepared for Year 1.
- There are warm relationships between staff and children. When planned activities interest children and have a learning purpose, they participate and persevere with tasks.
- Parents appreciate the school's open-door policy and feel that adults are approachable and friendly. However, they do not have enough opportunities to contribute towards the assessment of what their children know and can do.
- Teachers identify the needs of children with SEND. They have built strong partnerships with external agencies and use their skills to help children to make strong progress.

School details

Unique reference number	122563
Local authority	Nottinghamshire County Council
Inspection number	10087315

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	326
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Colin Barnard
Headteacher	Louise Regan
Telephone number	01623 408785
Website	www.hillocks.notts.sch.uk/
Email address	office@hillocks.notts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	1 March 2017

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- There have been several changes of headteacher since the previous inspection, as the substantive headteacher undertook a period of secondment. During this time, and following this, the school has been supported by Diverse Academies Trust and the local authority.
- There have been several changes to the leadership team since the beginning of the school year. Some leaders are currently absent from school. There have been many changes to the teaching staff since the beginning of the school year.
- There have been several changes to the governing body. Many governors are new to their role. The current chair took up his position in December 2018.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium is greater than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is greater than the national average.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed learning in all classes. Some of these observations were undertaken jointly with the headteacher or the deputy headteacher. Inspectors heard readers from key stages 1 and 2 and spoke with groups of pupils.
- Inspectors spoke with leaders in the school and scrutinised the school's assessment information.
- Inspectors spoke with parents taking their children to school and took account of the 12 responses to Parent View.
- Inspectors spoke with staff. They met with subject leaders and spoke with leaders responsible for early years, key stage 1 and key stage 2.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents which the school provided, such as the school's self-evaluation and school improvement plans. The lead inspector spoke with the associate headteacher and representatives from the local authority. She spoke with governors, including the newly appointed chair of governors.

Inspection team

Hazel Henson, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Janis Warren	Ofsted Inspector
Pete Strauss	Ofsted Inspector

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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.

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