

# Inspection of Highters Heath Community School

Highters Heath Lane, Kings Heath, Birmingham, West Midlands B14 4LY

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Inspection dates: 25 and 26 January 2022

## **Overall effectiveness**

**Inadequate**

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The quality of education

**Inadequate**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Requires improvement**

Personal development

**Requires improvement**

Leadership and management

**Inadequate**

Early years provision

**Inadequate**

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils at Highters Heath enjoy coming to school, and they want to learn. Pupils get on well with each other and try hard in their lessons. Leaders have made lots of changes to try to improve the school. However, they have not realised that some changes are not working very well. This means that pupils do not make as much progress with their learning as they should.

Pupils are not taught to read well enough. In other subjects, including mathematics, teachers do not always teach things in a logical order. In Reception, children do fun activities, but some of these do not help them to learn the things they need to. Leaders do not check effectively what pupils are learning. They do not give teachers the right help to improve their teaching.

Pupils are happy and feel safe. However, leaders have not made sure that all areas around the school are well maintained and cared for. This means that pupils cannot use them fully to play or work.

Pupils understand how to stay safe online. They are less sure about other types of bullying. Pupils know that when their friends are unkind, staff do sort it out.

## **What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?**

Leaders have made changes to the curriculum. However, they have not checked that the changes are helping pupils to make more progress. They have relied too much on historic and internal test results to evaluate the quality of the education that they are providing. As a result, they have an over-generous view of how effective the school is.

Leaders have planned a suitably sequenced phonics curriculum. Teachers know which sounds to teach and when to teach them. Pupils enjoy reading but are not given enough opportunities to practise the sounds they have learned. Staff do not check that pupils are saying their new sounds correctly. This means that pupils are not taught to read well enough. When pupils fall behind with their reading, leaders do not check if they are catching up.

In the Reception class, relationships are warm and positive. However, leaders have not thought carefully enough about the early years curriculum. This means that teachers plan work that does not build on what children have already learned. For example, in mathematics, pupils are taught to add before they can accurately count out five objects. Some planned activities are fun rather than meaningful. Staff do not use available spaces well to support learning.

Leaders have started to develop the curriculum in some subjects. However, in most subjects, it is not planned well enough. In history, the curriculum does not set out the key knowledge and skills that pupils need to learn in order over time. This means that teachers are unclear about the most important things to teach. As a

result, pupils do not remember important historical information. In mathematics, pupils do not have enough time to practise the new knowledge and skills they have learned. This leads to gaps in their knowledge as they cannot remember important mathematical knowledge and skills. For example, older pupils could not halve numbers or explain the link between place value and dividing by 10. This particularly affects those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Some leaders do not have the skills to check how well their subjects are being taught. They have not had support and training to help them identify what needs to improve. This means they cannot support other staff effectively to help them develop their teaching.

Pupils with SEND have support plans that are well matched to their needs. However, in day-to-day lessons, teachers do not support pupils with SEND well enough to ensure that they can access their learning. Leaders do not check that pupils with SEND make the progress they should.

Staff enjoy working in this school. They appreciate initiatives to reduce their workload, including the revised marking policy.

Pupils show respect for one another and their teachers. They particularly enjoy visitors to school and trips that support their learning. Their visit to Birmingham Hippodrome helped to support their understanding of music. However, leaders have not ensured that pupils understand enough about different religions and cultures.

Governors make attempts to check on the quality of education. They ask questions of leaders, but as leaders do not have a realistic view of the school, then this means that the information they present to governors is not accurate enough.

Leaders and those responsible for governance may not appoint early career teachers before the next monitoring inspection.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have put in place appropriate systems to keep pupils safe. Staff know what to do if they have concerns about a child. This is because leaders provide training, regular updates and quizzes for staff. Leaders respond quickly to safeguarding concerns using an online system. They work with other agencies to ensure that the right support is put in place when needed. Parents are grateful for this support.

Staff teach pupils to keep themselves safe. Pupils can explain how to stay safe when playing online games. They know it is important to look after their mental health.

## What does the school need to do to improve?

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders do not check how well children are learning across the school. This means that they have not been able to identify the key improvement priorities and the specific actions that they need to take to make improvements. Any action taken by leaders to bring about improvement has been put in place too slowly. Leaders, including governors, should ensure that they develop a systematic approach to monitoring which gives them an accurate picture of all aspects of the school's work and helps them to prioritise the areas they need to focus on first.
- Curriculum planning is in place for some subjects. However, teachers do not use it effectively in their teaching. Some curriculum planning is not well structured or thought through. Consequently, pupils are not building on their prior learning as well as they should. Leaders need to further develop curriculum planning so that it sets out the knowledge and skills in the correct order that pupils need to learn and ensure that teachers use this planning well to guide their teaching, in order to enable pupils to make strong progress in all subjects.
- Curriculum leadership is in the early stages of development in many subjects. Some curriculum areas are led by inexperienced staff. Consequently, those leaders do not have a strong overview of their subjects and lack the expertise required to drive improvement. Leaders should ensure that subject leaders receive the necessary support and training required to lead their subject area effectively. They need to ensure that subject leaders have the knowledge and expertise to check on the impact of the curriculum on pupils' learning and to support other staff to teach the subjects well.
- Some staff do not give pupils the chance to practise the sounds they have learned or check that pupils have learned the sounds they have been taught. As a result, pupils do not learn to read as quickly as they should. Leaders should ensure that staff give pupils regular opportunities to practise their reading and that they are confident to check pupils' progress in reading.
- The early years curriculum is not yet developed well enough. This means that teachers are unclear about what children need to be taught and in what order. As a result, pupils are given work and activities that do not meet their needs or build on what they already know. Leaders need to review and develop the early years curriculum, making sure that staff plan activities that help children to learn the key skills and knowledge, in the order that they need to have by the end of the Reception Year.
- Pupils have a limited understanding of fundamental British values, particularly in relation to other faiths and cultures. This does not prepare them well for their next stage in learning or life in modern Britain. Leaders and teachers should provide more opportunities for pupils to learn about and experience different cultures and faiths so that they are better prepared for life in modern Britain.
- School premises are not well maintained. Leaders do not check sufficiently well that the school environment supports play and learning. Leaders should ensure that pupils work in a well-maintained environment that supports learning and

play. They should put systems into place to regularly check their premises both inside and out to ensure this remains the case.

## **How can I feed back my views?**

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

## **Further information**

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	103365
<b>Local authority</b>	Birmingham
<b>Inspection number</b>	10211754
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	193
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Susan Richards
<b>Headteacher</b>	Brian Doherty
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.hightersheath.co.uk/">www.hightersheath.co.uk/</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	13 and 14 March 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school does not currently use alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID 19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- The lead inspector held a range of meetings with the headteacher. She met with four members of the governing body, including the chair in person and one

member remotely. The lead inspector also met with a representative of Birmingham Education Partnership.

- Inspectors held meetings with the designated safeguarding lead, the early years leader, the special educational needs coordinator and other leaders.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history.
- For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also looked at curriculum plans and spoke to leaders about some other subjects, including physical education. They met with subject leaders and teachers to talk about the quality of education in these subjects.
- Inspectors made visits to classrooms. Most of these visits were with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher.
- Inspectors made visits to the early years part of the school. Most of these visits were with the early years leader.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils formally and informally about their learning and experiences at school. They looked at pupils' work to see how well staff implement the curriculum.
- Safeguarding documents were checked, including the checks that leaders make on staff's suitability to work with children. The inspectors checked that staff implement safeguarding policies and procedures effectively across the school.
- Inspectors talked to parents at the beginning and end of the day. The inspectors considered responses to the online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, and the free-text responses received during the inspection.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's staff survey.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation provided by the school. This included the school's self-evaluation, the school improvement plan, school policies, curriculum documents, SEND records, published information about pupils' performance and minutes of governing body meetings.
- Inspectors looked at information published on the school's website.

## **Inspection team**

Stephanie Moran, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Janet Satchwell

Ofsted Inspector

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