

Highfields Community Primary School

Cumberland Avenue, Nantwich, Cheshire, CW5 6HA

Inspection dates 22–23 April 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- From their starting points pupils make good progress and reach standards in reading, writing and mathematics that, over time, are just above average.
- Early years provision is good and pupils' progress from when they first start school to the end of Key Stage 1 is excellent.
- Arrangements for supporting pupils with special educational needs and pupils who need extra help to learn key skills are well organised and effective.
- Pupils' conduct at school and their attitudes to learning in lessons are almost always good and sometimes exemplary.
- Pupils have a good understanding of right and wrong. They get on with one another, say that they enjoy school and respond well to the values that the school promotes.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding.
- The headteacher and school leaders have taken successful action to improve the quality of teaching. Consequently, teaching and achievement in Key Stage 1 have strengthened further. Teaching in Key Stage 2 has improved, and continues to improve, after a period of variability.
- Teaching and pupils' participation in physical education (PE) and sport are considerable strengths. Leaders have used the primary sport funding to good effect to make sure all pupils get good quality tuition and many opportunities to experience enjoyment and success in a range of sports.
- Governors are very well informed. They take their roles seriously, are proud to be governors and do all they can to drive forward school improvement.
- Parents express high levels of satisfaction with the school's work.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The high academic standards that were seen at the end of Year 6 at the time of the previous inspection have dropped.
- In Key Stage 2, pupils make faster progress in some classes than in others.
- Over time, the quality of teaching in Key Stage 2 has been variable in its effectiveness. It has not capitalised fully on the excellent start pupils get in the early part of the school.
- A few pupils do not adhere to the school's rule about school uniform or present their work with sufficient care. Occasionally, pupils chat when they should be listening to their teacher.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in classrooms and a physical education session on the school field. Some of these observations were carried out alongside the headteacher. Inspectors also observed a one-to-one support session, attended a whole-school school assembly, visited a workshop about animals that was being led by a visiting expert, examined pupils' work in books and on display, and considered school test and assessment data.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour, and the school's procedures, at the beginning and end of the school day, at lunch and break times, and when pupils were moving about the school site, taking part in activities, and preparing for a school trip.
- Meetings were held with pupils, staff, school leaders, subject leaders and governors. A telephone conversation with a local authority adviser took place.
- By the end of the inspection, there were 87 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View). Inspectors looked at these, took account of two letters from parents, talked to some parents at school and checked the school's routines for gathering parents' views. In addition, inspectors considered 21 responses to Ofsted's school staff questionnaire.
- A number of school documents were examined. These included: information about pupils' progress, the school's own evaluations of its work, school improvement plans, and information about the work of the governing body. Records relating to staff performance management, behaviour, attendance, safety and safeguarding were also scrutinised.

Inspection team

Martin Pye, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Mark Millar

Additional Inspector

Information about this school

- Highfields Community Primary is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Most of the pupils are White British.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is lower than the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils at the school is below the national average. The term disadvantaged pupils is used to describe those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority. These pupils receive additional support from pupil premium funding.
- In 2014, the school met the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school offers full-time early years provision in the Reception class.
- A before- and after-school childcare provider, Funzone, operates on the school premises. This is not managed by the school and is subject to a separate inspection at a different time.
- Since the previous inspection, there have been several changes of teaching staff, including the appointment of a new deputy headteacher.
- The school is part of a local partnership of schools called the Nantwich Schools' Partnership. This includes 14 primary schools and two secondary schools. The headteacher at Highfields has provided recent support to two primary schools in the partnership.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and boost pupils' progress, particularly in lower Key Stage 2, in order to raise standards higher at the end of Year 6, by:
 - making sure that teachers' checks on learning in lessons allow them to adjust tasks and explanations so that pupils of different abilities always get the support or challenge that they need
 - raising expectations of what can be achieved in every lesson.
- Build further on pupils' good conduct and positive attitudes to school by ensuring that the school's high expectations of school uniform, presentation of work and good listening in lessons are followed by all pupils.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and senior leaders have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. Since the previous inspection, leaders have maintained and strengthened the highly effective provision in early years and Key Stage 1. They have also taken action to reverse the drop in standards at Key Stage 2. Consequently, standards at the end of Year 6, which had slipped from well-above average to closer to average in recent times, are now rising again.
- Senior and middle leaders play a key role in making sure agreed policies, such as those for marking or checking on progress, are followed and work to good effect. To this end, they observe teachers at work, check pupils' books and provide advice and training in order to drive forward improvements in teaching and learning.
- The leadership provided by staff with responsibility for special educational needs is excellent. There are reliable systems for identifying pupils' needs and for checking on the impact of the support that is put in place. Record keeping is meticulous and aids purposeful communication between teachers, support staff, parents and the visiting specialists who provide additional advice from time to time. All of this means that pupils with special educational needs get well-informed help.
- The school has strong links with a local partnership of schools which enable staff and pupils to share expertise, resources and training. Leaders have employed staff with particular skills to work across several schools, and the headteacher has provided successful leadership support to nearby schools. Inter-school events in music and sport allow pupils to practise and showcase their skills and interact with a wider peer group.
- Teaching in different subjects is often supported by school trips or special events that enrich pupils' learning and understanding of the world. During this inspection, for example, the school's junior governors (pupils who have been elected as class representatives) were preparing for a trip to the Houses of Parliament. In Key Stage 1, pupils were inspired to write about nocturnal animals after seeing and touching live animals that had been brought into school by a visitor.
- Pupils understand the difference between right and wrong and show interest in the lives and beliefs of others. Messages around the school promote important values such as respect, and honesty and good relations. Through classroom discussions about subjects such as the Ancient Greeks, St. George, and the impending UK government election, pupils learn about equality, democracy and aspects of our heritage and national identity. Pupils are well prepared, socially and academically, for their secondary school education and also develop skills and attitudes that will help them in their future lives.
- Specific funds such as the pupil premium and the primary school sport funding are spent to good effect to improve pupils' experiences and achievement at school. The primary sport funding, for instance, is used to employ a specialist teacher who works across several schools. This input makes a remarkable contribution to pupils' achievement in PE and sport. All pupils benefit from weekly tuition and an increasing number get the chance to take part in regular events and tournaments. Consequently, pupils' and teachers' skills have improved and levels of participation in both competitive and non-competitive sport have risen. Similarly, the use of the pupil premium is helping to strengthen academic standards at the school.
- Across the school, all have an equal opportunity to take part and to achieve. No one is made to feel left out or treated unkindly or unfairly.
- The local authority has confidence in the school leadership and provides a low level of support. In addition to this, school leaders have commissioned additional support from an educational consultant. They use this external advice to check on the impact of the actions they have taken and to help them validate their own judgements about the school's effectiveness.
- Safeguarding procedures comply with current requirements and staff and pupils are suitably informed about the routines that help to keep everyone safe. This aspect of the school's work is highly effective.
- Parents express high levels of satisfaction with the work of the school. Of the 87 parents that responded to Parent View, 98% would recommend this school to another parent.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are capable, informed and articulate. They are proud of Highfields Community Primary School and make sure they get the information they need in order to do their job well. Consequently, governance is effective.
 - Individual governors take on specific responsibilities linked with key aspects of the school's work; special educational needs or the use of the pupil premium, for example. Governors in these roles are well informed and can speak with objective authority about the school's current position and priorities

for the future.

- Governors have a good understanding of school performance data and are knowledgeable about the use and effectiveness of specific funds and resources. In response to the 2014 Year 6 results, when the standards reached in writing by disadvantaged pupils were some way behind the above average results reached by their in-school peers, governors set ambitious targets for 2015. They are keeping a close eye on the attainment and progress of current pupils.
- Governors have routines in place to make sure they receive appropriate information about the quality of teaching and the steps taken to manage staff performance. They receive regular updates from school staff and leaders and make visits to observe the school at work and to check that procedures are working properly.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils of all ages display positive attitudes to school. In lessons they are keen to learn and around school they are polite, helpful and get on with others. In most situations, their conduct is good and, during this inspection, several instances of exemplary behaviour were seen; both in lessons and at break times. School records and comments from staff, parents and pupils indicate that this good, and sometimes excellent, behaviour is typical.
- Staff treat pupils kindly and pupils show kindness and consideration to one another. Older pupils act as buddies to the youngest children; they help them with their reading and look out for them on the playground.
- Pupils have a voice in how things are done at school. The junior governors gather pupils' views on school life and know that their opinions will be listened to and can influence decisions made by school leaders. For example, they have recently helped to bring about the creation of a new school library that has improved the range of books available for pupils.
- Attendance rates are above average and punctuality is good. There have been no exclusions for many years.
- There is no doubt that pupils' very good behaviour is strength of the school. It falls short of being outstanding for a few reasons: in a few cases pupils do not follow the school's agreed dress code; some pupils in Key Stage 2 display a casual attitude to the presentation of their work and, occasionally, some pupils chat quietly to one another when they should be listening to a teacher.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding.
- Procedures to ensure that risks are identified and managed in a proportionate and effective way are excellent. Staff and governors are fully informed about requirements and up to date with training and current practice.
- The school site is carefully maintained and secure and the level of staff supervision throughout the school day ensures that pupils receive sufficient attention at all times. Playground accidents are attended to promptly by appropriately trained staff, and risk assessments for activities such as school trips are thorough. All are aware of what to do to keep pupils safe in different situations.
- Bullying is extremely rare. Pupils are able to explain what constitutes unacceptable behaviour and report that conflict of any kind is uncommon. They are confident that they would recognise bullying, prejudice or discrimination should it occur and say that they would feel confident to report it and to challenge it. They are certain that school staff would not tolerate any form of behaviour that would make pupils feel unsafe or uncomfortable at school.
- Pupils are equally confident that the adults at school will help them with any problems or concerns that might arise. There is a 'help box' in each classroom and the school library for pupils to post any worries anonymously, should they feel the need to do so.
- Pupils are taught how keep themselves safe and display an excellent understanding of safety matters.

The quality of teaching**is good**

- Since the previous inspection, the quality of teaching in early years and Key Stage 1 has strengthened further. In Key Stage 2, the overall impact of teaching is good but, in recent times, there has been some variance in its quality and effectiveness.
- Over time, Key Stage 2 pupils have made faster progress in Years 5 and 6 than they have in Years 3 and 4. This is mainly because expectations of what pupils can achieve have not always been high enough. This variance is now much reduced and standards are rising again. Even so, some pupils, especially in Year 3, are not making as much progress as they could, especially considering the above average standards that they reached at the end of Year 2.
- The teaching of reading, writing and mathematics is all of a similar good quality and pupils do equally well in all three subjects. The school employs teaching staff to work specifically with pupils who need extra help to develop and practise their early literacy or numeracy skills. The success of this policy, together with the strong class teaching pupils receive, are the key drivers of the rising standards in Key Stage 1.
- Teachers' marking is frequent and consistent and pupils of all ages can explain how it helps them to improve their work. Inspectors' checks on pupils' books found that staff notice and follow up any mistakes or misunderstandings and, in response, pupils are attentive to teachers' comments.
- Teachers make regular assessments of pupils' progress and attainment. They share this information with pupils so that they know how well they are doing and understand what they need to do next in order to improve their skills and increase their knowledge. In addition, pupils display a mature ability to check their own work against assessment criteria, and frequently do so. When inspectors examined pupils' work they found teachers' assessments to be accurate and indicative of good progress.
- Staff checks on pupils' learning and progress in lessons, however, are not always precise enough. Well-informed planning means that classroom tasks often begin at an appropriate level for different abilities but, in a few instances, some pupils find the level of challenge increases too rapidly, while for others it does not increase enough. Teachers and teaching assistants sometimes notice this and make suitable adjustments or provide additional explanations, but not always. This is not a regular occurrence, although inspection evidence shows that it happens more often in lower Key Stage 2 than in other parts of the school.
- Pupils report that they enjoy lessons and most of them take pride in their work and its presentation. Classroom displays celebrate achievements in different subjects and also serve to support pupils' day-to-day learning by providing prompts and resources that help them with their work.
- The quality of teaching in PE and sport is superb. During this inspection, the school's specialist PE teacher was seen working with different groups of pupils and this input is clearly bringing benefits to pupils and staff alike, helping all to improve their skills.

The achievement of pupils**is good**

- Most children start school with levels of knowledge and skill that are typical for their age. During their time at Highfields Community Primary School they make good progress overall and reach standards in reading, writing and mathematics that are usually above the national average.
- At the time of the previous inspection, academic standards at the end of Year 6 were high. Since then, the rate of pupils' progress across Key Stage 2 has decreased and standards at the end of Year 6 have dropped. While, over time, standards have remained above average, the key reason why the inspection judgement on pupils' achievement has dropped from outstanding to good is because progress across Key Stage 2, particularly in the lower part of the key stage, has not built strongly enough on the rising standards of the pupils coming up from Key Stage 1.
- In contrast, standards in Key Stage 1 have risen year after year and the progress that pupils make from when they first start school to the end of Year 2 is excellent.
- Two significant reasons for the improving picture in the early part of the school are the effective consistency of teaching and the finely tuned extra support that is provided, when necessary, to make sure that all of the younger pupils get the best possible start and keep up with their peers.
- In the main, the most able pupils do well. In 2014, for example, the proportion of pupils that reached the above average Level 5 in reading, writing and mathematics compared favourably with the national picture. In mathematics, an above average proportion of pupils reached Level 6, the highest possible level achievable in primary school tests. Even so, some of the most able pupils currently in Key Stage 2 could be challenged to reach even higher standards. Similarly, there are a few occasions when groups of less-able or middle-ability pupils do not get the support or attention they need in order to make the best

possible progress across Key Stage 2.

- The achievement of disadvantaged pupils presents a mixed picture. However, as pupil numbers are small, care needs to be taken when analysing the statistics. In the 2014 Key Stage 2 test results for reading, there was little difference between the standards reached by these pupils and their peers in school. In mathematics and writing, however, there was a noticeable difference, with disadvantaged pupils being more than two terms behind in mathematics and over a year behind in writing. When compared to the performance of non-disadvantaged pupils nationally, the pattern is similar, although the attainment gaps in mathematics and writing are not as wide, with disadvantaged pupils at Highfields being about two terms behind in mathematics and about one year behind in writing.
- Checks on the work and progress of disadvantaged pupils currently in the school show that, in the current Year 6, disadvantaged pupils are making good progress from their starting points and are already working at standards in reading, writing and mathematics that are in line with, or above, the national average figures for the end of the key stage. In other year groups, attainment gaps between the disadvantaged pupils and others are narrowing or have closed.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs receive well-informed and effective support. They are provided with the teaching and resources they need. Their progress is reviewed regularly and provision checked carefully. Consequently, they do well. The progress made by these pupils, academically, socially and emotionally, is a strength of the school's work.

Early years provision

is good

- Early years provision is effective because of strong leadership. The early years leader has an excellent understanding of how children learn and, together with the early years team, has created a vibrant and purposeful learning environment.
- Most children start school having experienced some form of pre-school provision; usually in one of the many nurseries in the local area. The early years team has established good links with these providers and arranges training and meetings in order to share practice and gather information about children's starting points, which in most cases are broadly in line with those typical for their age, when they first enter school.
- During their first year in school, children make good progress overall. In some areas of learning, particularly those linked with creative and social development, they make excellent progress.
- Children make good progress because teaching is good and they receive warm encouragement that builds their confidence, nurtures their skills and promotes their good behaviour. Consequently, they settle in quickly, enjoy school and are keen to have a go and do their best in all areas of learning.
- The strong foundation that they receive in the Reception class means they are well prepared for learning in Year 1. In 2014, for example, the proportion of children that reached a good level of development was in line with the national figure, with a similar picture being seen in 2013, too. It is, however, worth noting that in the prime areas of learning (communication and language, physical development and personal, social and emotional development) children at Highfields exceeded the national figure.
- Attentive supervision and good teaching mean that children are kept safe, feel safe, and achieve well in their first year at school.

What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	111081
Local authority	Cheshire East
Inspection number	461583

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	212
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Susan Knight
Headteacher	Simon Dyson
Date of previous school inspection	22 November 2011
Telephone number	01270 371196
Fax number	01270 627409
Email address	head@highfieldsnantwich.cheshire.sch.uk

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



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.ofsted.gov.uk

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, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

[Piccadilly Gate](#)
[Store St](#)
[Manchester](#)
[M1 2WD](#)

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

© Crown copyright 2014

