

Highfield Junior and Infant School

Highfield Road, Saltley, Birmingham, West Midlands B8 3QF

Inspection dates

16–17 January 2019

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

- Senior leaders have high ambitions for the school. Their unyielding determination has meant that they have overseen rapid improvements to the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- Leaders' actions have improved pupils' achievement throughout key stage 2. The progress of pupils in reading, writing and mathematics has rapidly improved in 2018.
- The trust provides excellent support for leaders at all levels and has ensured that any weaknesses in leadership have been successfully addressed.
- As a result of very strong and focused professional development, the quality of teaching is good. Those who are new to the profession are particularly well supported.
- Pupils are proud of their school. Work to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is highly effective. Pupils' understanding of British values is strong. They have a strong understanding of racism, know this is wrong and say that it is not an issue in this school.
- The school's curriculum strongly supports pupils' language development. This helps pupils, particularly those who speak English as an additional language, to make good progress in their learning.
- Governors are very well informed and provide effective support and challenge to leaders.
- Although the teaching of phonics during lesson time is effective, pupils do not apply their phonics knowledge routinely across the curriculum. Therefore, misconceptions in learning are not addressed.
- Teachers and teaching assistants ask effective questions during lessons, but do not routinely give pupils the time they need to respond. Some pupils have developed an over-reliance on adults and this has reduced the capacity for pupils to work independently.
- Teachers do not always insist on high standards of presentation and neatness in pupils' work.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by:
 - ensuring that misconceptions that occur outside of the planned phonics sessions are routinely addressed by adults so that children apply their phonics knowledge effectively enough across the wider curriculum
 - enabling pupils to be less reliant on adult support, so that they independently apply their skills across the curriculum
 - raising expectations of the quality of presentation and pupils' handwriting skills.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The drive and commitment of the senior leadership team have resulted in rapid improvements throughout the school. They have a strong grasp of the areas for development and have a significant capacity for improvement.
- Weaknesses in teaching have largely been addressed. School leaders from across the academy trust provide high-quality professional development to all staff. A shared vision of excellence is reflected in the passionate way leaders and teachers discuss opportunities available for them to improve. Teachers and teaching assistants confirm that they benefit from effective training and coaching in a supportive, positive environment.
- The well-designed curriculum meets the needs of all groups of pupils within the school and includes a wide range of enrichment opportunities. There is a clear vision for the further development of the curriculum, which is shared by all stakeholders.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted strongly. Pupils conduct themselves well and relationships across the school are respectful, particularly with regard to pupils' backgrounds or religious beliefs.
- Pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain. The community cohesion team has visited a nursing home, collected litter, looked at dangerous parking and arranged a citizenship week. Activities are arranged by the school to develop pupils' cultural and social awareness and enable them to become caring citizens.
- The majority of parents are positive about the school. They feel that they are listened to and that the new leadership of the school has made a significant difference to their children. A typical comment indicated that there had been a significant improvement at the school and that leaders were positive and listened to parents.
- Middle leaders check the quality of teaching rigorously to see what is working well and what needs further work. They are enthusiastic about their work and have a clear view on how their work links directly with improving outcomes for pupils. They have had a significant impact on pupils' outcomes in a relatively short period of time.
- The physical education (PE) and sport premium for primary schools is used effectively. The academy trust has been very involved in maximizing the use of the sport premium and governors have spent significant time analysing its impact. They have ensured that all pupils in Year 4 access swimming lessons and that pupils have the opportunity to take part in many diverse sports.
- Although pupils' attendance rates are below the national average, they are improving. Actions taken to improve attendance are having a positive impact. Links with the community are supporting positive relationships between home and school. Additionally, leaders do not shy away from taking firm action, such as issuing penalty notices, if required. Consequently, pupils' attendance has more recently improved.

Governance of the school

- There have been significant changes to the governing body in recent years. The chair and the vice-chair are relatively new to their roles, but both are experienced governors. Governors have a range of appropriate expertise and clear systems which enable them to support and challenge school leaders effectively.
- Governors have a thorough understanding of the school's strengths and the areas that need to improve further. Minutes of meetings show that they ask leaders challenging questions, for example about what the school is doing about persistent absentees and the impact of actions taken.
- Governors check that additional funding, such as the pupil premium grant and funding for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), is spent wisely and makes a positive difference to these pupils.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- A strong safeguarding culture runs through the school and leaders ensure that pupils are safe and well cared for. All staff responsible for the different aspects of safeguarding are effective in their approach to maintaining accurate records and taking action.
- Staff access regular training in how to keep children safe. They are well informed and take their responsibilities seriously. Pre-employment checks on new staff are thorough.
- Staff are knowledgeable about the community they serve. They are aware of any potential risks and provide appropriate support for vulnerable families. The school works effectively and tenaciously with external agencies to provide suitable care for pupils.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment have improved and are now good. This is reflected in better outcomes for pupils. New systems for monitoring teaching have led to the development of training that is effective in improving staff knowledge and skills.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and they plan learning activities that interest pupils. They know their pupils well. The positive relationships between teachers and pupils allow for lesson time to be used productively. Pupils collaborate with each other willingly and routinely support each other's learning.
- Teachers use assessment information effectively to inform their planning and adapt their teaching when necessary. As a result, pupils across the school are making good progress from their varied starting points. Additional support and intervention, when required, are timely and are matched to pupils' needs effectively.
- The school has developed a new approach to the teaching of reading that is in line with the other schools in the trust. Pupils develop a range of reading skills through the use of high-quality texts. These texts interest and inspire pupils. Teachers ensure that

pupils understand a wide range of vocabulary. As a result of these changes, pupils are making faster progress in their reading.

- The teaching of writing is improving strongly. Pupils write with increasing levels of confidence in a range of contexts. Teachers provide pupils with clear and precise advice on their writing. Over time, this leads to pupils improving their writing and making good progress.
- Mathematics is generally well taught. Staff set carefully structured work and use focused questions to test out pupils' knowledge and skills and deepen their understanding. Pupils, including the most able, are challenged well in mathematics. Throughout the school, teaching typically takes into consideration what pupils already know and what they need to understand to make good progress. Pupils regularly tackle appropriately complex mathematical reasoning and problem-solving activities.
- The teaching of phonics consistently follows the school's chosen strategy. Over time, pupils' outcomes in the Year 1 phonics screening check have not improved. In part, this is because teachers do not routinely reinforce the knowledge gained in the daily phonics lessons during other activities and lessons. This also affects how pupils decode words, especially in the key stage 1.
- Teaching assistants are well deployed. They have a positive impact on learning and on pupils' well-being. They support pupils effectively and help remove barriers to their learning. Some pupils have become reliant on this support and as a result struggle to finish tasks independently.

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 well cared for, feel safe in school and indicate that staff are friendly and approachable. Pupils trust leaders to take effective action to resolve any concerns they have.
- During their time at school, pupils develop a good understanding of the concepts of freedom and democracy and of Britain's parliamentary system. They spoke enthusiastically about the current issues facing Britain, such as Brexit.
- Through assemblies, weekly personal, social, health and citizenship lessons, and the many educational visits and extra-curricular opportunities provided by the school, pupils are motivated to think about the world around them.
- The curriculum provides opportunities for pupils to learn about safety, such as staying safe online and understanding their own emotional wellbeing. Work is also done to support families in poverty and to raise awareness of the 'Prevent' duty to deter radicalisation and extremism.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.

- Pupils treat each other, adults and school property with respect. The vast majority of pupils have a positive opinion of the school. The school's records show that a few pupils show signs of challenging behaviour at times. The systems that are in place to support behaviour in school are understood, are consistently applied and have had an impact on improving behaviour.
- Attendance is improving. Leaders have introduced a range of strategies, including engaging with parents who find it difficult to get their children to school on time and on a regular basis. This work has been effective in improving attendance overall and in reducing the number of pupils who are persistently absent.
- Leaders have introduced a new electronic system for logging behaviour and any safeguarding incidents that take place. Although analysis of the trends and patterns is still in the development stage, the school was able to demonstrate an overall reduction in the number of negative incidents and in their severity.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- There is clear evidence, including within pupils' books, that the majority of pupils presently at the school are making strong progress. They are rapidly diminishing the difference between their attainment and that of other pupils nationally. However, the school is aware that the attainment of pupils in reading, writing and mathematics still lags behind that of other pupils nationally.
- Current pupils make strong progress from very low starting points in reading, writing and mathematics throughout key stage 1. In 2018, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected or higher standard in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 1 was below average. However, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected and higher standard in all these subjects has improved considerably in the last two years. This reflects the recent improvements in the quality of teaching of reading, writing and mathematics.
- Historical published information indicates that by the end of key stage 2 pupils have made rapid progress from their starting points in reading, writing and mathematics. Standards of attainment by the end of Year 6 in 2018 were below average. However, results from national tests and assessments of Year 6 pupils in 2017 indicate that standards have risen considerably. This represents good progress. Furthermore, inspection evidence, such as work seen in pupils' books, demonstrates that pupils currently in key stage 2, in particular those in Years 5 and 6, are making good progress. Standards of attainment are now rising quickly.
- Pupils who are at the early stages of learning English, and the high proportion who speak English as an additional language, are supported well and make good progress in their learning. Teachers and teaching assistants put in place a comprehensive programme of support to ensure that these pupils make strong progress from their various starting points.
- Pupils with SEND are well supported. The deployment of dedicated staff and the provision of additional resources are having a positive impact on progress. Currently, pupils with SEND are making good progress.

- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress throughout the school. Published information and inspection evidence show that the differences in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally are diminishing. Current pupils are making the strongest gains in reading and mathematics.

Early years provision

Good

- Most children start at a point at least 12 months behind than children of the same age nationally. Despite this, the majority of children make good progress across the Reception class and around half catch up with other children nationally and reach the early learning goals.
- Children, including those with SEND, make consistently strong progress from their starting points because of effective classroom support. The school ensures that staff receive suitable training and guidance, so that they understand how best to support children who find learning difficult.
- The early years provision is well led. The early years leader has high expectations. These are combined with an accurate picture of the strengths and weaknesses in the provision. Planned actions are varied and monitored carefully to ensure that they have the desired impact on children's achievement.
- The activities provided in the Reception areas are well planned and resourced and stimulating. Both the indoor and outdoor areas for the Reception classes provide a range of opportunities for children to explore and develop their physical skills.
- The partnership between staff and parents is strong. The flexible start to the school day allows parents to come in with their children and to comfortably communicate any concerns or catch up with their children's progress.
- Safeguarding and health and safety requirements are met effectively in the early years. Children's behaviour is good, and they learn to follow adult instructions obediently and respectfully.
- Occasionally, the support from some additional adults does not engage children in purposeful play or learning. For example, sometimes the questions adults ask do not provide children with the opportunity to reflect upon or deepen their thinking. When this occurs, children do not make as rapid progress as they could.

School details

Unique reference number	142570
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10053517

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	836
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Dr Scott Banks
Head of School	Ashley Knibbs
Telephone number	0121 675 0798
Website	www.hifield.bham.sch.uk
Email address	enquiry@hifield.bham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is now part of the Prince Albert multi-academy trust.
- Nearly all pupils are from minority ethnic groups. Most pupils are of Pakistani heritage.
- More than half of the pupils are known to be eligible for the pupil premium
- Almost all pupils speak English as an additional language. A significant number of pupils are at an early stage in learning to speak English.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is above average. The proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan is also above average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in all classes across the school. Senior leaders accompanied inspectors during some of these observations.
- Inspectors had discussions with two groups of pupils from Year 1 and Year 5 and heard them read. Inspectors held discussions with the community cohesion team. They also talked informally with pupils around the school.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work in all year groups and across a range of subjects.
- Meetings were held with the chief executive of the trust, the head of school, senior subject leaders and four newly qualified teachers. Inspectors also met two members of the governing body, including the vice-chair.
- Inspectors talked to parents at the start of the school day as well as taking account of the five free-text responses from parents.
- Pupils' behaviour was observed during lessons, at playtimes and lunchtimes and around the school site.
- Inspectors examined several documents, including the school's self-evaluation, the school improvement plan and information relating to pupils' achievement, attendance and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Max Vlahakis, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Chris Wright	Ofsted Inspector
Anne Potter	Ofsted Inspector
Julie Griffiths	Ofsted Inspector

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