

Heronswood Primary School

Heronswood Road, Kidderminster, Worcestershire DY104EX

Inspection dates 2–3 July 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The head teacher and senior leaders have made an excellent contribution to raising achievement and improving teaching.
- Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is exemplary and consequently these pupils are making outstanding progress.
- Pupils currently in school are now making outstanding progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Over time they have made good progress in reading and mathematics from their low starting points.
- Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are now above average in reading and mathematics.
- Pupils eligible for the pupil premium, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are making more than expected progress and rapidly closing the gap with the national average for all pupils.
- Teaching is good and is improving towards outstanding. Weak teaching has been completely eradicated.
- Pupils behave well in and around school and they feel extremely safe.
- Governors hold senior and middle leaders to account through a number of committees that keep a close check on whether standards are rising.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The recent accelerated rate of progress has not been in place long enough for pupils in Key Stage 2 to have made outstanding progress over a longer period of time.
- Too few pupils for whom the school receives extra funding have reached the highest possible levels of attainment in reading, writing or mathematics.
- Progress and attainment in writing are not as high as they are in reading and mathematics.
- Some middle leaders have not been in their posts long enough to take up everything their roles demand and to have a full impact.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed parts of 13 lessons, all of which were jointly observed with either the headteacher or another senior leader. In addition, the inspector made a number of other short visits to lessons.
- Meetings were held with two groups of pupils representing all year groups from Reception to Year 6, members of staff including senior and middle leaders, members of the governing body including the Chair, a representative of the local authority and a local headteacher who is a national lead in education. In addition the inspector spoke to 18 parents in the playground at the start and end of the school day.
- The inspector took account of the 16 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as the school's own recent parental survey, which received 79 responses, and a pupil survey.
- The inspector observed the school's work and scrutinised a number of documents, including data on pupils' recent attainment and progress, behaviour and attendance logs, reports of the pupil premium to the governing body, recent minutes of the governing body's meetings and procedures for safeguarding.
- The inspector also evaluated the impact of external funding for pupils eligible for the pupil premium (which is additional government funding for pupils in local authority care and those known to be eligible for free school meals) and the sports premium.
- The inspector also looked at the school's website, in particular information provided for parents.

Inspection team

Mark Sims, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium is very high.
- Most pupils come from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and the percentage known to speak English as an additional language are both very low.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well above the national average. The percentage supported through school action is below average. The majority of these pupils have speech, language and communication needs.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The secondment of an additional assistant headteacher to the school finished at Easter. The current literacy, numeracy and physical educational coordinators have all been appointed recently.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that pupils make as much progress in writing as they do in reading and mathematics by
 - making sure leaders are checking teaching and learning in writing as closely as they are in reading and mathematics
 - enthusing older pupils so they have the same passion for writing as they do for mathematics
 - making sure lower attaining pupils always have enough time to complete their writing activities.
- Ensure that more-able pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium reach the highest possible levels in reading, writing and mathematics by:
 - checking all teachers and support staff are suitably trained to support pupils aiming for the higher levels
 - ensuring there are additional extracurricular activities targeted at more able pupils
 - providing opportunities at school for pupils to complete and receive support for homework.
- Enhance the role of middle leaders so that they all
 - know their performance targets that are linked to their management role
 - use additional funding to target support accordingly
 - have the opportunity to report to the governing body.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils have made accelerated progress in reading, writing and mathematics throughout this academic year in all year groups from the Early Years Foundation Stage to Year 6. In Year 6 this has compensated for the slow start pupils made at the beginning of Key Stage 2 as a result of previous weak teaching.
- Over a longer time pupils have still managed to make good progress, having made more gains this year than in the previous two years combined. Since the end of Key Stage 1 the proportion of pupils making or exceeding expected progress is especially high in mathematics. It is in line with the national average in reading but below in writing.
- Test results for Key Stage 2 in 2014 show that pupils have exceeded the previous year's national average in reading and mathematics and are close to it in writing. The proportion achieving the highest possible levels is broadly in line with national figures overall but higher than average in mathematics and writing. More-able pupils are being challenged well and are making good progress.
- The proportion of pupils reaching the expected level in the most recent Year 1 phonics test was well above the percentage achieved last year and above last year's national average, as was the percentage of pupils achieving a good level of development in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium have made more than expected progress in Key Stage 2 and are closing the gap with the national average rapidly. The latest test results for Year 6 indicate that the proportion achieving the nationally expected level 4 was above the national average compared to all pupils in reading, in line with the national average in mathematics and below in writing.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium achieving at least a level 5 in reading, writing or mathematics was below the national average for the same peer group, reflecting their very low starting points at the end of Key Stage 1.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs have also made more than expected progress during the year in reading and writing and especially in mathematics. The small number of minority ethnic pupils, including those for whom English is an additional language, have made similarly good progress.
- Pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage have made exceptional progress from their very low starting points. Baseline assessments, externally checked, have given an accurate indication of pupils' starting points and regular half-termly tracking has indicated their outstanding achievement to reach or exceed the expected level of development for their age by the end of Reception. This has been achieved through the very high quality of provision.
- Work seen in pupils' books shows they are currently making exceptional progress in all Key Stages, as result of the consistently high quality of teaching and support now in place. This rate of progress was also a feature of the lessons observed. Pupils' enthusiasm and willingness to learn is a contributory factor to the rapid gains they are making in their learning.
- The very large majority of parents responding to the school survey and on parent view agreed that their children are making good progress in school.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is now consistently good, as indicated by the progress pupils in all year groups have achieved this year. Pupils' work in books clearly shows the improvements they have made. All previous weak teaching has been eradicated either through some staff changes or improvements in practice.
- In the Early Years where teaching is outstanding, activities are extremely well planned to promote the development of literacy and numeracy. Pupils display a real thirst for knowledge, for example as they sought out 'tricky' words on their bug hunt.
- Teaching overall is characterised by a suitable pace and urgency that implies that no minute can afford to be wasted. Pupils spend very little time being told what they need to do and get down to their learning quickly. Teachers make sure that they are working at the right challenging level, for instance by giving them guided choices about what level of work to do. For example in a Key Stage 2 mathematics lesson on long multiplications pupils chose whether to start with orange questions or go straight to the more challenging green ones.
- Teachers' questions are set at different levels to encourage those who can to give extended answers and justify their opinions while encouraging those who find learning more difficult to participate as well.
- Lessons are planned well to help pupils learn the skills of investigation and enquiry, especially in mathematics and science. For example, pupils had to look for patterns when adding up consecutive numbers and find out whether the size of a balloon determines the length of a splash mark when it bursts.
- Lessons set with a real purpose provided a stimulus and a reason for pupils' writing. The discovery of an "unexploded bomb" in the school field and involvement of a serving soldier led to pupils, including boys, writing lively journalist reports using the features of non-fiction language.
- At its best, additional support allows pupils who find writing hard the chance to engage in extended writing, including in other subjects such as mathematics. It also allows more able pupils to be challenged to take their learning further. Teachers are skilled at setting work for pupils of a wide range of ability and sometimes maturity in mixed age classes.
- Most marking is effective in making sure pupils respond to the guidance they get; for example much gives pupils the chance to engage in a written conversation with teachers, through the use of different coloured pens.
- In a few lessons lower attaining pupils take longer to move to writing tasks and do not always get to use the technical features that are the aim of the lesson.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Behaviour is good. Pupils are polite and courteous to each other and to adults both in the classroom and moving around the school.
- They are keen to do well and from Early Years to Year 6 they have their enthusiasm for learning

ignited by interesting activities which make full use of the whole grounds of the school and beyond. Older pupils are particularly positive about their mathematics lessons while younger pupils show equal enthusiasm for a wider range of subjects including writing.

- In lessons seen, the large majority of pupils showed they are able to stick to their learning over lengthy periods of time including when engaged in extended pieces of writing. Occasionally the attention of a very small minority of boys wanders in lessons but they are brought back to learning very quickly either by themselves, their peers or a nearby adult.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. They show mutual respect for each other including those from different backgrounds. Pupils have a natural curiosity and interest in learning new languages and finding out more about the countries where some of their friends are from.
- Pupils are aware of what to do if there is a behaviour incident. They are equally confident in reporting to either teachers or mid-day supervisors. The number of recorded behaviour incidents fell sharply in the spring term and is on track to fall further in the summer term.
- Some pupils reported they had been bullied and that in almost all cases it had been sorted promptly. A very small proportion of pupils said that some bullying still happens but they agreed it is now much more rare. Themes such as bullying and sexual abuse are addressed sensitively through personal social and health education lessons and special assemblies, for example recent visits from the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) and the police.
- The very large majority of parents who expressed a view in responses to the school survey and parent view agreed that bullying is dealt with effectively by the school, although a large minority of parents responding to parent view said they did not know how well bullying is dealt with. Parents spoken to in the playground said that where bullying had occurred the school dealt with it promptly and effectively.
- Attendance continues to improve while persistent absence is falling, including for those eligible for the pupil premium. Figures for attendance and persistent absence are now better than the national average. Systems for checking on pupils the first day they are absent are very thorough, especially for identified pupils at risk of becoming vulnerable.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils reported they feel very safe in school. The new fence gives them security in the school grounds and they have reported a range of activities they have participated in to keep safe. The recent police visit covered e-safety, alcohol, drugs and smoking. Pupils have also been informed how they can contact 'childline.'
- During the inspection Year 6 pupils were engaged in cycle proficiency tests which emphasised road safety. Almost all parents responding to the school survey and parent view agreed that their children feel safe in school.
- Pupils know about different kinds of bullying and know what to do if they see something inappropriate on the internet. They are aware of different kinds of abuse and would report it if they heard it. Such incidences are exceptionally rare but are reported to the governing body if they occur. There have been a very small number of racist incidents reported and none that were homophobic.

- The headteacher and senior leaders have been relentless in bringing about improvements as quickly as possible. Regular and rigorous checking of the quality of teaching prompted some significant changes in staffing which in the short term resulted in some disruption to learning. There is now a stable staff teaching lessons that are consistently good or better. Through training and support, remaining staff have significantly improved the quality of their teaching.
- Senior leaders have a very accurate view of strengths and weaknesses in the school and a very clear picture of the quality of teaching now and over time.
- The checking of teaching has gone hand in hand with close analysis of pupils' progress data including the progress made by different pupil groups. Data is now captured half termly so leaders can quickly identify any issues with groups and or individual pupils and put in place appropriate action or support. Teachers and support staff are held closely to account for the progress of learners.
- Leaders set highly challenging targets which they expect all pupils to achieve including for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. Procedures to assess pupils' progress and attainment have been tightened through external checks to make sure achievement figures are as accurate as possible.
- Leaders check systems in place for marking are applied consistently and that the quality of marking is high. As a result, there are few occasions where marking is incomplete or pupils are not responding to the guidance. Pupils' work is also checked as another way of measuring the progress they are making.
- Middle leaders are developing into their roles. Recent changes in middle leadership means some are still new in their posts but all have begun to get involved in observing teaching and providing feedback to teachers. This has not yet included checking the teaching of writing. Not all middle leaders are aware yet of performance targets linked to their leadership roles or have had the chance to report to the governing body.
- Leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is excellent. Changes to the outdoor environment (supported by parents) have considerably enhanced the provision and contributed to the significant gains in learning made by pupils. Other local schools are now visiting the school as a beacon of outstanding practice. Data is checked rigorously, including externally, to ensure it is accurate before pupils move on to Key Stage 1.
- The school's strong commitment to equality ensures that the building is fully accessible to those pupils with physical disabilities, who are able to participate in almost all aspects of school life including sport, the dance club, residential trips and outdoor learning on the school field.
- The school has analysed the impact of the pupil premium in raising the achievement of eligible pupils to levels favourable with the national average. It recognises the challenge remains to utilise the funding to ensure more eligible pupils reach the higher levels and ensure that teachers and support staff are suitably trained to enable pupils reach the higher levels.
- The additional funds from the sport premium have been used effectively to improve pupils' performance and physical wellbeing, by providing a wider range of resources and training within the school and beyond through its partnership with Stourport Sports Partnership.
- The school has widened the range of subjects and topics that pupils study, and involved them in making choices about what they will learn. Pupils have already begun to study languages. The

forest schools and work on Diwali and Eid contribute significantly to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils enjoy a range of additional activities including dance club and cross-country events funded by the sports premium. Opportunities for more able pupils and completing homework in school are more limited.

- All safeguarding requirements are in place and, through the dedicated work of the child protection officers, pupils at risk of becoming vulnerable are closely tracked and supported.
- The local authority has worked effectively in partnership with the school and provided or arranged additional support, including in physical education, upper Key Stage 2 and the secondment of an assistant headteacher. The school is now in a position where it has sufficient capacity to improve within its leadership team and is no longer reliant on external support.
- The school seeks out the views of parents and pupils so that it receives regular feedback. In its own parental survey a minority of parents did not agree that they were well informed about the day to day running of the school. Consequently the school has responded by improving the quality of the information it sends parents through a variety of means including the revamped website, a parents' letter and a newsletter, although these developments are still very recent.
- The large majority of parents responding to the school survey and parent view said they would recommend the school to another parent.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is very determined in challenging as well as supporting the school. Governors know the school well. They are well briefed on progress data and through regular visits to the school, observations, scrutiny of books and discussions with pupils and parents are very well informed. They understand how good teaching is and what is being done to improve it.
 - The performance of senior leaders is scrutinised through a series of committees including achievement, learning and teaching and a writing focus group, although not all middle leaders have yet engaged with this process. Governors set challenging performance management targets for the headteacher which have already been achieved this term.
 - They are up to date with safeguarding requirements and training. They know how the pupil and sports premium money is spent and receive detailed analysis of the impact on achievement.
 - Governors are keen to seek out views of parents and have responded to criticisms to improve communication. Parents now receive a newsletter from governors, who also have a high profile at events where parents are present.
 - Governors are playing a leading role in discussions about the future direction of the school and have already met with parents about its future proposals.

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	135053
Local authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	440656

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	288
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Joanna Watson
Headteacher	Matthew Ascroft
Date of previous school inspection	21 May 2013
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