

Highfields Primary Academy

Coppice Road, Highfields, Doncaster, DN6 7JB

Inspection dates

7–8 March 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	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.

- Pupils make good progress and achieve well throughout the school. As a result, from low starting points, their attainment by the end of Year 6 in English and mathematics is broadly average.
- Pupils benefit from teaching that is usually good. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Relationships are good and contribute positively to the progress that pupils make.
- Pupils behave well and say they feel safe in school. They know how to keep themselves and others safe from danger. Pupils take on a variety of responsibilities and, in so doing, add to the life of the school.
- The Principal has high ambitions for the school and provides clear educational direction. The governing body and senior leaders have worked well together to drive improvement. They have provided good quality training that has successfully improved the quality of teaching and accelerated pupils' progress.
- There are good procedures for checking how well the school is doing. Leaders use this information effectively to plan for further improvement. The governing body is supportive and effective in holding the school to account for its performance.
- The school's leadership has shown it is capable of continuing to make improvements.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- Teachers do not always set work that brings out the best from pupils. Marking is not used consistently to indicate to pupils how they might improve.
- Pupils do not have enough chance to work things out for themselves and think about what they have learned.
- Pupils' sentence structure lacks accuracy. Their quick mental recall skills are not well enough developed. There are not enough opportunities for pupils to practise their literacy and numeracy skills in different subjects.
- Though improving, attendance is not yet high enough.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed 10 lessons or parts of lessons taught by six teachers. Three of these were joint observations with the Principal.
- Discussions were held with the Chair of the Governing Body, staff, pupils and the Chief Executive of the sponsoring trust.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at school documentation, including that relating to safeguarding, records of meetings of the governing body, assessment information and curriculum planning. Work in pupils' books and displays around the school were examined. The inspector listened to groups of pupils read.
- There were insufficient responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) for the inspector to take into account in carrying out the inspection. Account was taken of the responses to a recent school questionnaire sent to parents to gain their views about its performance.

Inspection team

Melvyn Hemmings, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Highfields Primary Academy converted to become an academy school on 1 April 2012. When its predecessor school, Highfields Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be satisfactory.
- It is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- A well above average proportion of pupils are eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in local authority care, pupils whose parents are in the armed forces, and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- A high number of pupils start or leave school other than at the normal times of the year.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set minimum expectations for attainment and progress.
- The on-site children's centre is subject to a separate inspection and the report published on the Ofsted website.

What does the school need to do to improve further

- Raise pupils' attainment in English and mathematics to above the national average by:
 - improving pupils' ability to accurately use grammar, punctuation and spelling in their writing
 - quickening pupils' mental recall skills in mathematics
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to practise and develop their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects.
- Improve the quality of teaching further by:
 - making sure teachers always set work that is at the right level of difficulty for different groups
 - providing pupils with more opportunities to find out things for themselves and to think about what they have learned
 - ensuring marking is used consistently to show pupils how they might improve.
- Raise attendance further by building upon the improved links with parents.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils achieve well from their skill level on starting school, which is well below that expected for their age. Progress across year groups is consistently strong. Consequently, pupils' attainment in English and mathematics is broadly average by the end of Year 6.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage enjoy making choices for themselves. They play and work happily together, showing enthusiasm in their activities. This was evident when children in Reception were using the role-play area set out as a post office.
- In Years 1 to 6, pupils concentrate well and persist when faced with difficulty. They enjoy making contributions to group and class discussions and appreciate the views of others. Pupils are keen to learn and get on well with their work.
- Attainment in reading is below average at the end of Key Stage 1 and broadly average by the time pupils leave school. This is because they build upon their skills as they pass through the school, particularly their ability to use their knowledge of letters and sounds to read unfamiliar words.
- Pupils enjoy writing, but for some pupils their sentence structure lacks accurate use of grammar, punctuation and spelling. They have secure calculation skills in mathematics but their mental recall is not well enough developed for them to solve number problems quickly. There are not enough opportunities for pupils to practise and develop their literacy and numeracy skills in different subjects.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress. Their individual needs are identified early and well-targeted extra support is provided to meet them. The progress of pupils who join during the year is good because the work given to them moves them on swiftly.
- The funding for pupils eligible for the pupil premium has been used effectively and raised the attainment of these pupils in English and mathematics. It has been used to provide small groups and individual support and this has successfully narrowed the gap between pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and other pupils in school. As a result, their attainment in English and mathematics is now similar to that of other pupils.

The quality of teaching is good

- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, adults work well together to meet children's individual needs. They provide activities that are practical, interesting and successful in moving children's learning and development forward. The outdoor area is used effectively to extend learning that has taken place indoors.
- In Years 1 to 6, teachers use questioning well to find out what pupils know and to deepen their understanding. Classroom management is good and activities are engaging, which leads to pupils getting on with their work well. Good use is made of a variety of resources, including new technology to enhance learning.
- Teachers use information about how well pupils have learned to help them plan future lessons. They make it clear to pupils what they are to learn and what they need to do to succeed. This was evident in an English lesson for pupils in Years 4 and 5 in which they effectively developed their understanding to show how a character is feeling.
- There are times when the work set for pupils does not get the best out of them, being too easy for some and too hard for others. Marking is not used consistently to show pupils how they could do better. Teachers do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to work things out for themselves and to think about what they have learned.
- The school has provided good quality training for teaching assistants to develop their skills further. They provide valuable support to all pupils, particularly disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and pupils eligible for the pupil premium.

- Pupils' spiritual and moral development is promoted well by opportunities for them to learn about the world around them and by the high expectations of staff regarding behaviour. Social and cultural development is fostered by the many opportunities to work together and to learn about cultures different to their own.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' good behaviour makes a strong contribution to the progress they make and to the friendly atmosphere that is evident throughout the school. Pupils are keen to learn and are supportive of each other in lessons. They are polite and behave considerately to others, commenting that, 'Everybody helps each other, especially when someone is feeling sad.'
- Parents, staff and pupils say that behaviour has improved considerably over the last year. This is borne out by the reduction in incidents noted in the school's behaviour logs. Pupils act responsibly in and around school and their behaviour in lessons ensures minimal disruption to learning.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the different kinds of bullying, including internet and physical bullying. They say bullying is rare and have confidence in staff dealing with it if it did occur.
- Pupils say they feel safe and secure in school because they are well looked after by staff. The curriculum is planned well to raise pupils' awareness of the potential dangers associated with road, rail, water and internet use. Consequently, they have a good understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe.
- Though attendance is improving, it is below average because some pupils do not attend regularly. Leaders are targeting further improvement by working to strengthen relationships with parents of these pupils, particularly those that are hard to reach.
- Pupils add to the life of the school effectively by taking on a variety of responsibilities, including being a member of the school council. In so doing they give pupils a say in how the school develops. Councillors have led a variety of initiatives including designing the new pupil uniform and being involved in the provision of a wider variety of playground equipment.

The leadership and management are good

- The Principal has shown great determination in driving forward improvements. She is well supported by senior leaders and the governing body who enthuse staff to do their best. Morale is high and the ability of leaders to carry on making improvements is good.
- The management of how staff perform has been made more rigorous and led to improvement in the quality of teaching. The training of teachers and other adults has been improved, so that it effectively meets the needs of the school and individual staff. The link between the performance of teachers and their salary progression is strong.
- Leaders carefully check the quality of teaching and ensure that any areas for development given to teachers are responded to successfully. The arrangements for assessing how well the school is doing accurately identify the correct areas for development. The actions taken to bring about improvement are evaluated regularly to see if any changes need to be made.
- Equality of opportunity and tackling of discrimination is promoted well. The procedures for checking the progress of different groups have been streamlined so that any disparity can be quickly identified and swiftly tackled. This is seen in the successful action taken to raise the attainment of pupils eligible for the pupil premium.
- The sponsoring trust provides strong support for the school and is influential in helping it to develop.
- Staff model professional standards well, showing respect and courtesy for pupils and other adults. Relationships at all levels are good and contribute positively to pupils' learning and development.

- The curriculum is planned well to ensure that pupils are interested in learning and to effectively promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. It is enhanced by extracurricular activities and visits, such as to the National Space Centre in Leicester.
- Stronger links with parents have led to the considerable increase in pupils' attendance but leaders know there is more to do to improve it further.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governance is good. The governing body knows the school's strengths and weaknesses and takes part in regular training to maintain its effectiveness. Governors are fully involved in helping the school to improve and ensure that safeguarding requirements are met. They understand the data relating to the school's performance and know how the management of performance is used to improve staff expertise and reward good teaching. Governors have an accurate view of the quality of teaching. They manage the budget effectively and hold the school to account for the way the funding for pupils eligible for the pupil premium is used to raise their achievement.

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	138083
Local authority	Doncaster
Inspection number	400172

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	113
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sharon Golze
Principal	Caroline Bean
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01302 722216
Fax number	01302 727973
Email address	info@highfieldspa.org.uk.

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