

Howley Grange Primary School

Howley Grange Road, Halesowen, B62 0HS

Inspection dates 11–12 September 2013

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The work of the headteacher, well supported by a strong staff team and governing body, has led to a number of improvements in a comparatively short time.
- The quality of teaching is good. Teachers promote learning well and demonstrate good subject knowledge, thanks to leaders' thorough and regular checks on the quality of teaching, followed up by effective staff training.
- Pupils of all abilities achieve well and standards at the end of Year 6 are well-above average in reading and writing and improving rapidly in mathematics.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding and this contributes strongly to the good learning in most lessons and leads to sustained high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Provision in the Reception class is good and children make a strong start in learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children respond well to the good range of stimulating activities provided and are confident and inquisitive about the world around them.
- Pupils are treated with respect and as individuals in an atmosphere of care and support. As a result, they are considerate and take very good care of each other and are welcoming and courteous to visitors. School records confirm there have been no recent incidents of bullying.
- Pupils enjoy a good variety of exciting additional activities throughout the school year, including visits, visitors and residential stays.
- The school accurately evaluates how well it is doing and what needs to be done next.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils' attainment in mathematics, although improving rapidly, is not yet as high as it is in reading and writing.
- Just occasionally, teachers do not provide work at the right level for all pupils in the class and, in a small minority of lessons, the pace of learning slows after a good brisk start.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 28 lessons, three of which were observed jointly with senior staff. The inspectors also made a number of shorter visits to classrooms.
- Meetings and discussions were held with governors, members of staff, a representative of the local authority and groups of pupils.
- The inspection took into account the 57 responses to the online questionnaire for parents and carers (Parent View) and the outcomes from the school's consultations with parents.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school's own data on pupils' current progress, planning and monitoring documentation, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Clive Lewis, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Wendy Hanrahan

Additional Inspector

Anthony Green

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Howley Grange is a larger-than-average primary school that is heavily oversubscribed.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage and very few speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional government funding for pupils eligible for free school meals and other specific groups) is below the national average.
- Pupils are organised in single-year-group classes, two classes per year.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who are supported at school action is below the national average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is broadly average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further raise the overall quality and consistency of teaching by ensuring that:
 - all learning in lessons proceeds at a brisk pace throughout
 - teachers consistently provide appropriately challenging work for all pupils in their classes.
- Take the improvement in achievement in mathematics forward by ensuring that pupils are provided with a wider range of opportunities to practise their calculation and numeracy skills in other curriculum areas.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Good teaching leads to pupils of all abilities, including the more able, making good progress throughout the school. This progress is reflected in the good quality of learning and pupils' positive attitudes in lessons observed and is confirmed by the work in pupils' books.
- Children's experiences and skills when they enter the school in the Reception class are above those typically found for this age group overall, although their reading and writing skills on entry are below those typically found. They get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage and make good progress in their first year in school. Through the good variety of activities provided, children become well motivated and this has a positive effect on their achievement.
- Pupils in Reception and in Key Stage 1 quickly learn the sounds letters make (phonics) to support their writing, as well as the mathematics skills they need to complete simple calculations. Pupils in Key Stage 2 continue to build on these good achievements and, by the time they leave the school at the end of Year 6, attainment in reading and writing is well-above average.
- Current standards in mathematics are in line with national expectations. Attainment in mathematics has been lagging behind that in English but is improving rapidly due to the school's focus on improving the curriculum and the quality of teaching of mathematics. However, pupils are not provided with enough opportunities to practise their calculation skills across the curriculum.
- Pupils make good progress in developing their reading skills. Younger pupils are taught to read through regular phonics lessons and guided reading activities which then continue in all age groups. As a result, pupils throughout the school read confidently and develop a love of books.
- School data indicate that those pupils eligible for the pupil premium make the same and, in some cases, better progress than that of their peers and attain similar standards in English and mathematics. Any barriers to learning are quickly identified and the funding is used well by the school to provide carefully matched additional support through frequent one-to-one or small-group work. The school also uses a proportion of the money allocated to ensure these pupils can join in all the extra activities provided.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress. Class teachers, teaching assistants and outside agencies provide good support. This ensures that work is set at the right level for them, enabling them to make small but progressive steps in their learning. Provision and the quality of care for the small number of pupils with significant learning and/or physical needs are excellent.

The quality of teaching is good

- Good teaching enables pupils of all backgrounds and abilities to respond very well and learn successfully during their time in school. Teachers plan their lessons well, sharing with pupils what is to be learned and, in the best cases, how they can judge successful learning for themselves. This aids their interest and involvement in learning and spurs them on to try hard and learn well.
- Skilled teaching of physical education by specialist teachers motivates pupils very well so that

they enjoy and look forward to their lessons and make good progress.

- A good range of stimulating activities, both indoors and out are provided by staff in the Early Years Foundation Stage classrooms. These help make children confident and inquisitive about the world around them.
- Good use is made of resources, including information and communication technology, to motivate pupils and enhance their learning. Marking of pupils' work is up to date and, in the best cases, gives pupils guidance about how well they have met the learning objective and how they can improve their work.
- In one outstandingly well taught Year 4 literacy lesson focusing on writing a non-chronological report of a river study undertaken by the class a few days ago, good use of resources and a brisk pace led to a high level of motivation, and pupils made exceptional progress. The teacher made very good use of questioning to improve pupils' understanding and provided opportunities for self- and peer-assessment so that pupils had a very good awareness of their own progress. They enthusiastically shared their ideas and also worked independently while the teacher provided support through highly skilled questioning that accelerated progress.
- In most lessons, learning moves along at a good pace, but in a small minority of lessons, the pace of learning slows after a good start. Similarly, although in most lessons teachers plan appropriately challenging work for all groups of pupils, including the more able, in a few lessons, the work set does not always match the varying abilities of pupils in the class.
- Teachers' strategies to manage pupils' behaviour are very effective, with the result that lessons are calm and purposeful. Pupils concentrate on their work and work hard without the need for constant adult intervention. There is no discrimination evident in the school and all pupils are given equal opportunities to succeed.
- Pupils are supported by a strong and well-deployed team of teaching assistants who provide good support for individuals and groups, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, and pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium.
- Pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics is checked and tracked rigorously as they move through the school. Senior staff meet each class teacher half-terminly in order to evaluate and discuss the information about progress and attainment gained and to set targets for further improvement. These meetings ensure that each teacher has a clear understanding of how well the pupils in their charge are doing and the action they need to take in order to support them in reaching their improvement targets. Summary assessments are also undertaken termly for all the foundation subjects and for pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. Pupils know their targets for learning and report that the targets and special tasks to accelerate their progress 'are very helpful'.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The school is a calm, friendly and very orderly place in which to learn. Behaviour is generally outstanding in classes, around the school and in the playground areas. Pupils move around the school calmly and quietly.
- Relationships between pupils and adults are extremely positive. Pupils' attitudes to learning are exemplary and this is a major factor in the good progress they make in lessons. Pupils respond very well to the many opportunities planned for them to discuss their ideas with other pupils,

either with a partner or in small groups.

- Pupils report that the school has an effective system of rewards and sanctions, which ensures that any unsatisfactory behaviour is dealt with effectively and promptly. Pupils who find behaving well more difficult are sensitively managed and skilfully supported so that, typically, their behaviour improves significantly.
- Pupils say they enjoy coming to school and they are enthusiastic about their education. This is reflected in their consistently high levels of attendance. The level of punctuality in the mornings is, similarly, extremely high. Pupils attend and respond well to the good range of before- and after-school activities, including sports activities.
- Pupils have a good understanding of different forms of bullying, including any that might be encountered through internet sites. They say that, 'Buddies help each other and that's why we all get on.' They have a good understanding of how to keep safe and say that they feel very safe in school. They say they are confident that any issues they raise will be dealt with promptly. Pupils understand the need for healthy lifestyles and exercise. Through the school council, they demonstrate their pride in the school community and take their responsibilities very seriously, running a tuck shop and a school bank, for example.
- Pupils respond extremely well to the strong moral and social guidance they receive. They develop very positive attitudes to life and learning through the teaching of common values and expectations through assemblies, and in personal and social education lessons. They have a very clear sense of what is right and wrong.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher's strong leadership and infectious enthusiasm are a significant factor in the good and rapid improvements made since he joined the school. These include significant and ongoing improvements to the school environment, both indoors and out – pupils report, 'It's a much brighter school now' – a revised curriculum, the introduction of innovative technologies, a strengthened assessment and tracking system and higher expectations of what pupils can achieve across the school.
- As a result of regular monitoring and support, teaching is typically good across the school, and planning is founded on robust evidence and based on accurate data. Thus the school demonstrates the capacity to improve.
- Staff are a well-motivated, enthusiastic team who demonstrate a shared sense of responsibility and commitment to improving the school. They are set challenging targets based on the quality of their teaching and the progress pupils make in their classes, and these are reviewed annually.
- All pupils and families are known very well by staff. The school's very positive relationship with parents and carers and its good links with a wide range of partners contribute significantly to improvements in pupils' achievement and well-being. Safeguarding systems are secure and discrimination is not tolerated.
- Good leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage ensure that children make a strong start to their learning.
- The school is deeply committed to all pupils achieving well, discovering new interests and developing their talents. It is constantly alert to any variation in achievement and is proactive in

devising initiatives to overcome any weaknesses.

- Fully supported and monitored by the governing body, the school makes effective use of the money derived from the pupil premium to support frequent small-group and one-to-one work. This helps eligible pupils to achieve as well as their friends.
- Primary sport funding is used appropriately to provide all pupils with weekly physical education lessons led by skilled sports trainers – one child noting that these lessons ‘keep us energetic and fit’. Provision is well-planned and systems are fully in place for the evaluation of the provision at a future date.
- The school provides a rich and imaginative curriculum experience for all its pupils. The recent sharp focus on supporting numeracy has been matched by the introduction of a more imaginative and exciting programme of topics. This change has had a positive effect on pupils’ enthusiasm, progress and ability to work and learn independently and has been much enjoyed by pupils.
- The school provides outstanding personal care for its pupils. This ensures that all pupils are able to learn successfully and develop confidence, regardless of their individual circumstances. Pupils learn to reflect on and appreciate their own skills and the skills of others. This approach, together with collaborative work, is very successful in increasing pupils’ self-esteem and promotes their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development exceptionally well.
- Self-evaluation has identified the appropriate key areas for school development. Support from the local authority has been helpful to the school in checking its performance and in training for staff and governors.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body provides good support and challenge for leaders and managers to ensure that the school improves and moves forward. It plays an active role in the school’s self-evaluation, monitoring and improvement planning processes. It checks that safeguarding is secure and has effectively overseen the arrangements for the use of the pupil premium funding. Governors know what the quality of teaching is across the school and effectively apply the arrangements for relating teachers’ performance to pay. It has a good understanding of the data and the comparative performance of the school in relation to similar schools. It knows what is happening in the school, is aware that overall provision is good and is ambitious for the school to improve even further.

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	103814
Local authority	Dudley
Inspection number	427078

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	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	421
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jane Bruten
Headteacher	Simon Duncan
Date of previous school inspection	12 November 2008
Telephone number	01384 818395
Email address	info@howley.dudley.sch.uk

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