

# Howitt Primary Community School

Holmes Street, Heanor, DE75 7FS

**Inspection dates** 2–3 October 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Inadequate</b>	<b>4</b>
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching		Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Inadequate	4

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires special measures.

- Pupils' attainment is well below average and their progress is too slow. There are few signs of improvement.
- Achievement is particularly poor for some groups, such as boys, those eligible for the pupil premium, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.
- There is not enough good teaching to ensure that pupils make adequate progress.
- The pace of lessons is often slow and the work provided for less-able pupils asks too little of them. As a result, they fall behind.
- In some lessons, boys do too little work. They lose concentration and let girls answer the large majority of the questions.
- Teachers do not always insist on high standards of behaviour; this slows down learning.
- There is some poor attendance by pupils eligible for the pupil premium.
- The leaders make too little use of the information they gather on pupils' achievements to help those falling behind.
- The systems for managing teachers' performance provide insufficient guidance on how to improve the quality of their teaching and ensure all pupils make enough progress.
- Teachers are not sufficiently held to account for the progress of different groups of pupils in their class.
- The governing body is not sufficiently aware of weaknesses in the teaching and pupils' achievement, or the impact of the pupil premium funding on the progress or attendance of disadvantaged pupils.

### The school has the following strengths

- Pupils feel safe and free from any form of bullying.
- The school provides good support to pupils who find it hard to behave well.
- There is some good teaching that helps pupils to achieve well and enjoy their work.
- Recent improvements in achievement in reading at Key Stage 1 have resulted from better teaching of word-building skills.
- The new headteacher has quickly gained a grasp of what needs to be done to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 28 lessons, of which one was observed with the headteacher. The inspectors also made a number of brief visits to other lessons.
- Meetings were held with pupils, leaders of subjects, members of the governing body, and a representative of the local authority.
- There were insufficient responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) to take into account parents' views in this way, but inspectors took note of parents' views through talking to them and reading their comments in letters sent to the inspection team.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including records of the progress of pupils, planning and monitoring files, behaviour records, and documents relating to attendance and safeguarding.

## Inspection team

Terry Elston, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Lynda Townsend

Additional Inspector

Andrew Beckett

Additional Inspector

## Full report

*In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.*

*The school may not appoint newly qualified teachers at this time.*

### Information about this school

- This is a larger-than-average primary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for certain groups such as pupils in local authority care and those known to be eligible for free school meals, is above average and rising year by year.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage and very few speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average, while the proportion supported at school action plus or through a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The headteacher has been in post since September 2013.
- 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?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that pupils make at least good progress by ensuring that teachers routinely:
  - make the pace of teaching brisk enough to motivate and challenge all groups of pupils
  - give pupils sufficient time in lessons to work at tasks matched to their levels of ability
  - ensure that boys take as full a part in lessons as girls and get on quickly with their work
  - check that pupils eligible for the pupil premium are supported fully in their learning
  - provide work that is challenging but achievable for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs
  - make detailed assessments and use information and communication technology effectively to support the youngest children.
- Improve the impact of leadership and management by:
  - ensuring all senior leaders and governors regularly check the quality of teaching and learning
  - giving clear information to teachers on how they can improve their skills
  - allowing teachers opportunities to learn from the best teaching in this and other schools
  - holding teachers to account for the progress of different groups such as boys, pupils eligible for the pupil premium, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs
  - ensuring that all teachers follow and apply the guidance in the behaviour policy
  - improving attendance, particularly of pupils eligible for the pupil premium
  - setting targets in the school improvement plan that focus clearly on underachieving groups.

Ofsted will make recommendations for action on governance to the authority responsible for the school. An external review of governance, to include a specific focus on the school's use of the

pupil premium, should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is inadequate

- Pupils make slow progress during their time in the school. Children join with skills and understanding that are below the levels typical for their age and leave with standards that are well below average.
- Children make steady progress in the Nursery and Reception classes, but many still struggle with basic speaking, reading, writing and number skills when they enter Year 1. They make the best progress when working at writing and number tasks in groups supported by adults, but sometimes they have to sit for too long as a whole class, holding back the most-able children.
- In Key Stage 1, attainment is well-below average in reading and mathematics; it is below average in writing. In the 2013 assessments, the proportion of pupils reaching and exceeding the expected levels declined in both English and mathematics. In reading, the 2013 check on phonics (the sounds that letters make) for pupils at the end of Year 1 showed a very good improvement on the previous year's results, but by Year 2 few pupils read fluently because they find it hard to tackle new words. Boys' reading is particularly weak. Many say they rarely read at home and, in whole-class reading sessions, they often let girls work out the sounds that make words.
- In mathematics in Key Stage 1, pupils enjoy practical tasks involving money and shapes, but have too little practice at basic number work to feel confident at working out even simple sums in their heads. This affects their attainment in all aspects of mathematics and particularly when asked to solve number problems.
- Pupils' writing is interesting and improving by working at activities such as correcting the teacher's deliberate mistakes and discussing with their partners the best word to use in a sentence. However, much of their writing is very brief; spelling is weak.
- National test results for pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 declined in 2012 and continued this downward trend in 2013. Attainment in mathematics and writing is well-below average. Few pupils attain the higher levels in the tests and a growing proportion fails to reach the national standard in either English or mathematics. Boys' attainment consistently lags behind that of girls in both subjects.
- By Year 6, some pupils still find it hard to read unfamiliar words, or even have a reasonable guess at their meaning, affecting their achievement in all subjects. Few pupils attain the higher levels in reading, or have the skills to skim texts quickly to gain information.
- Pupils' spelling is weak and they often make errors with their punctuation, particularly when writing in their topics or in science. While boys have good ideas for writing, they tend to take longer to get started and, by the end of the lesson, leave work unfinished. That is because the staff's expectations about how quickly they will get down to their work, and the amount of writing to be completed, are too low.
- In mathematics, there is a particularly large difference in attainment between the most- and least-able pupils. The most-able pupils have the confidence to tackle complex problems because they work out what the question means and have the basic number skills to arrive at the right answer. The least-able groups, however, have poor basic skills; they often lack the ability to make sense of the question and still have to use their fingers to add small numbers.

- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make slow progress. Expectations of the older pupils in particular are too low; they spend too much time working at mundane tasks, or playing games that do little to close the gap with others. In 2012, pupils in Year 6 were over two years behind others in both English and mathematics.
- Pupils supported by the pupil premium underachieve. The 2012 test results in Key Stage 2 showed slow progress and attainment that was over a year behind others in the school in both English and mathematics. There was some improvement in 2013, when results showed that the difference had narrowed to less than a year in English and closed completely in mathematics. In Key Stage 1 in 2013, however, pupils were nearly two terms behind others in reading, writing, and mathematics, with a wider difference in both writing and mathematics than in 2012.

### **The quality of teaching** is inadequate

- The overall quality of teaching is not good enough to ensure pupils make enough progress. It varies from good, when pupils of all abilities enjoy challenging tasks and achieve well, to inadequate, when progress by the most-, and least-able, pupils is poor.
- Often, the pace of teaching is too slow and pupils lose interest as the teacher goes over things time and again. Sometimes, pupils have to sit too long as a class and they have too little time to work at tasks that are matched to their level of ability.
- The systems for putting older pupils in ability sets for English and mathematics do not work well. While the middle- and higher-ability pupils sometimes make good progress, the disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs work with teaching assistants who are not prepared well enough to get the best out of the pupils. For example, tasks such as colouring in shapes while other groups are excited by challenging investigations mean that the least-able pupils fall further behind in each lesson.
- Teachers do too little to arrest the underachievement of different groups in the class. They allow girls to dominate class discussions (in one lesson, girls answered 17 out of 21 questions) and do not always know which pupils are supported by the pupil premium and may need extra help.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, there is some good teaching when children learn how to count and sort numbers and are supported well by adults. Where learning is slower, however, children work too long on their own without sufficient support to develop their skills to the full. Weaknesses in the checking of children's progress make it hard for the adults to gauge it accurately.
- There is some good teaching when tasks challenge all groups of pupils. In these lessons, the least-able pupils are supported well by a skilled teaching assistant in the classroom and the most able work on their own; for example, to plan a newspaper report. On those occasions, the teaching assistant is there to help any pupil who needs it and pupils can support each other.
- The quality of marking has improved since the last inspection. Teachers' comments give clear detail on pupils' strengths and weaknesses and provide helpful guidance on the next steps in their learning.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** requires improvement

- While there is little unruly behaviour, in too many lessons, learning is hampered by some pupils

ignoring the teacher's instructions to put their equipment down, or calling out answers to questions after being told to put their hands up. This is because teachers do not apply rules consistently; pupils know they can ignore them if they want to.

- Girls tend to concentrate better than boys, which is why they often make much faster progress. Boys enjoy talking about their work and have very good ideas that they share with 'talking partners'. However, when getting down to work, some boys continue these discussions and are still writing the title when girls are halfway through the task.
- In many lessons, pupils behave well. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage soon learn the rules and quickly put their hands up to answer a question. They tidy up after activities, share equipment sensibly and learn how their actions can affect others.
- Most pupils enjoy school and say how much they value the way teachers help them when they are stuck. They arrive punctually and nearly all attend regularly. However, attendance by pupils eligible for the pupil premium is consistently lower than that of other groups; the school's efforts to reduce absences by this group have had limited impact.
- Pupils feel very safe at school and say how well staff respond to the rare instances of bullying and racism. Pupils are very knowledgeable about different types of bullying and know to take care when using the internet. Records show that instances of poor behaviour are reducing.
- Pupils are courteous towards adults and one another. They discuss issues sensibly and readily accept opinions that are different from their own.
- Pupils take responsibility well. Older pupils enjoy being 'buddies' for younger ones and members of the school council represent the views of others well. They also help to improve behaviour by working with the adults to evaluate the systems for rewards and sanctions.
- A few pupils find it difficult to manage their own behaviour. They are supported well by the behaviour support team, which helps build confidence and improves relationships.

### **The leadership and management are inadequate**

- Leadership and management are inadequate because the leaders have been unable to make the improvements in teaching and learning necessary to raise achievement. Observations of teaching, undertaken solely by the headteacher in the past year, rarely commented on the progress of groups such as boys, those eligible for the pupil premium, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. This means that the difference in attainment between these pupils and others is not reducing fast enough. Subsequent observations rarely evaluated any progress made by teachers in rectifying any weaknesses.
- Teachers have few opportunities to learn from best practice in this school or elsewhere.
- The annual reviews of teachers' performance do not sufficiently hold teachers to account for the progress of pupils in their class, or to frame targets to reduce differences between groups.
- The school has a wealth of data on pupils' attainment and progress, but does too little with this information to provide support to those who are falling behind. The effectiveness of the pupil premium funding, spent on extra teaching assistants and individual tuition, is not evaluated well enough to see if it has made a difference to pupils' achievements or attendance. The school

website provides scant information to parents and carers on how this funding helps disadvantaged pupils.

- The school's improvement plan has worthy targets, but does not focus on the groups of pupils who consistently underachieve. This limits its value and the school's capacity for sustained improvement.
- The leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are inadequate. The information recorded on children's progress is not precise enough to allow staff to judge achievement accurately. The work of teaching assistants is monitored regularly and evaluated. However, this is not the case for the teachers in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The use of information and communication technology to support children's learning remains as weak, as it was in the last inspection.
- The new headteacher has quickly gained a clear view of the school's priorities for improvement. She is working well with senior leaders to set new priorities and involve other leaders in the evaluation of teaching and learning.
- Teachers with subject responsibilities are developing their skills as leaders and run well-received training days to improve staff's skills. However, leaders have little first-hand knowledge of teaching in their subjects and this limits their impact.
- Although the local authority has provided a wide range of support to the school, this has not been effective in improving the quality of teaching and raising pupils' achievement rapidly. School leaders and teachers are still not sufficiently aware of what different groups of pupils need to help them to learn, especially disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.
- Safeguarding systems are rigorous and are reviewed regularly by the leaders and governing body.
- The school is making good use of the new national sports funding to improve pupils' skills and enhance their enjoyment of competitive games. Sports coaches ensure that pupils learn the correct techniques and pupils say how much this helps them succeed.
- Most parents and carers are pleased with the way they are informed about the work of the school and their children's progress. They appreciate the way the headteacher and leaders make a point of greeting them each morning as they bring their children to school. Parents and carers value the courses run by the school to help them support their children and improve their own skills.
- Pupils find the activities outside lessons interesting and appreciate the clubs at lunchtime and after school that enhance their musical and sporting aptitude. They enjoy the broad topics they study and the opportunities to research using books and the internet. A wide range of visits and visitors enhances pupils' experiences and aids their personal and social development.
- There are too few opportunities for pupils to use the skills learnt in literacy and numeracy sessions in other subjects. Pupils do not take enough care and make too many errors in their work.
- Leaders and managers have not focused well enough on the quality and accuracy of the pupils' reading, writing, and mathematical skills when they use these in different subjects of the

curriculum. They do not ensure that teachers have high enough expectations of pupils and there has been insufficient focus on how well and how regularly teachers check the quality of pupils' work.

- Pupils enjoy many opportunities to reflect on issues such as the beauty of nature and the importance of caring for the environment. They learn about different faiths. They gain much from contact with children from distant countries, learning about their way of life.
  
- The governance of the school:
  - The governing body has a basic understanding of the school's effectiveness, gained through visits, meetings with senior leaders, and 'learning walks'. Governors have benefited from recent training about their responsibilities, but still rely on the school leaders to interpret data on pupils' achievements. They know too little about the quality of teaching to hold the leaders to account fully for the school's performance, or to make informed decisions about teachers' pay. Governors have a reasonable awareness of the school's budget, but lack accurate information from the leaders on the impact of the pupil premium funding.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	135172
<b>Local authority</b>	Derbyshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	425042

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	415
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Bob Harper
<b>Headteacher</b>	Pam Purdon
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	19 January 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	01773 713217
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