

Heath Mount Primary School

Mary Street, Balsall Heath, Birmingham, B12 9ST

Inspection dates 11–12 February 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Early years provision		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Leaders and managers at all levels have not maintained the high standards evident at the previous inspection. Teaching is not consistently good. Much requires improvement.
- Teachers do not always provide work at the right level of difficulty, especially for pupils who find learning easy and this limits their progress.
- Leaders at all levels, including governors, do not have timely access to information about the current progress of groups of pupils across the school. This means they do not have a clear picture of pupils learning and progress in different subjects.
- Staff are not held to account for the progress of individuals and groups of pupils at regular meetings with senior leaders.
- Marking does not always explain to pupils how to improve their work.
- Attainment is broadly in line with those found in other schools nationally with the exception of writing where pupils are nearly a year behind where they should be.
- The progress made by the most able and those supported by the pupil premium varies from class to class and is not always good.
- Pupils are not given enough opportunities to use their mathematical skills to solve complex problems. They are not given enough opportunities to produce longer pieces of writing.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, there is a lack of up-to-date information about the progress made by specific groups of children across the areas of learning from when they start school. This slows down the progress of some children because teachers are not able to quickly identify and close any gaps before the children move into Year 1.
- Not all of the required information is on the school's website.

The school has the following strengths

- Relationships among pupils and between pupils and staff are strong, contributing to a harmonious school community.
- A wide range of experiences enrich pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils' punctuality and attendance have improved and pupils come to school ready to learn.
- Behaviour is good and children feel safe.
- There have been improvements in the way pupils use their understanding of phonics (the sounds that letters make). As a result, their ability to read unfamiliar words is improving and their progress in reading is increasing.
- Attainment at the end of Year 2, has improved over the last two years, except in writing.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed the school’s work including pupils’ learning in 26 lessons or part-lessons. Four of these were jointly observed with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with pupils, staff, including senior and subject leaders, governors and a representative of the local authority. Account was taken of the results of the staff questionnaire.
- The inspectors looked at work in pupils’ books and heard some pupils reading.
- Informal discussions took place with parents and account was taken of the recent parent questionnaire. There were too few responses to Parent View for inspectors to be able to analyse results.
- The inspectors looked at a range of documents and policies concerning school management and keeping children safe.
- The inspectors took account of the school’s evaluation of strengths and weaknesses and the resulting plans for improvement and the school’s information about pupils’ attainment and progress.

Inspection team

Shannon Moore, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Ellen Taylor	Additional Inspector
Jeremy Bird	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a larger-than-average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is around one quarter of the pupils in the school which is one and a half times national levels.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the pupil premium (government funding to help disadvantaged pupils who are entitled to a free school meal or in the care of local authority) provides support is around twice national levels.
- The majority of children are from different minority ethnic backgrounds, more than three times the national levels. Almost half of the children are of Pakistani heritage. The proportion of children where it is believed English is not their first language, is more than five times the national levels.
- Mathematics is taught in mixed-year ability groups in Year 2 to Year 6 classes.
- Pupils in Reception classes attend full-time.
- Since the last inspection phase leaders and subject leaders have been appointed.
- The school meets the current government floor standard, which sets 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 it is always good or better by ensuring that:
 - the level of challenge is appropriate for the abilities of the pupils, including the most able
 - marking and feedback make it clear what pupils need to do to make faster progress, and that pupils have time to act on the advice
 - more time and opportunities are provided for pupils to do longer pieces of writing and to apply their mathematical knowledge in problem-solving.
- Improve leadership at all levels by ensuring that:
 - senior leaders and governors have frequent and easy access to information on the progress of individuals and groups, to analyse and inform teaching and strategic planning, and identify where additional support is needed
 - leaders use the pupils' progress information to hold teachers to account and support them to adapt their teaching to improve achievement
 - pupils' progress is more regularly monitored to identify where timely, effective support can be given
 - the progress of specific groups of children in the early years is tracked and used to inform teaching and provide support.

External reviews of governance and the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how these aspects of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management requires improvement

- After a period when standards fell, leaders are now working effectively with staff to accelerate pupils' progress and raise standards. However, the progress of all pupils is not yet consistently good in reading, writing and mathematics.
- There is strong commitment to ensuring all pupils are valued and have equal access to all that the school has to offer. Leaders ensure that there is no discriminatory practice. Pupils told inspectors that everyone is equally important in the school. Despite this, there is some unevenness in the progress made by some groups of pupils.
- The quality of teaching is lower than it was when the school was last inspected. Leaders have taken appropriate steps to begin to rectify this by ensuring there is no inadequate teaching and to reduce the proportion of teaching that requires improvement. However, teaching is not always good or better and does not allow all groups of pupils to make at least good progress.
- Subject and phase leaders have the appropriate subject knowledge and experience in their areas of responsibility. Even so, their effectiveness has been reduced because of poor access to information about how specific groups of pupils are achieving. In some cases this delays the provision of extra support.
- The self-evaluation is broadly accurate, but too often it describes what has been done rather than the impact of actions on the progress of pupils. It is not always clear what judgements have been made. There is no separate evaluation of Early Years provision. The school's improvement plan explains what the school and the subject and phase leaders will do but there are few targets included to show what progress is expected of groups of pupils.
- There are good opportunities for staff training linked to the improvement plan and to individual teachers' needs. Procedures to check the performance of teachers are in place. Targets include some of the school's priorities, but do not include what progress their pupils should make, which limits their effectiveness.
- The recent parent questionnaire shows parents are very positive about the quality of the leadership and the quality of teaching. One parent described the managers and staff as a 'brilliant team'. During the inspection, parents came to a health and safety workshop led by the emergency services, to an assembly led by Year 1 and to a workshop on how they could support their Year 6 children.
- The curriculum is being redesigned in line with the changes to the national curriculum and topic work is being developed. There is a good range of subjects and a rich programme of additional experiences. Every child in Key Stage 2 learns to play an instrument. Their learning is celebrated in an annual concert at a large venue.
- Leaders are developing new assessment materials and there is a new system for collecting and recording this information across all subjects. While this is improving the accuracy and availability of information about pupils' performance, it is too early to judge its impact.
- The provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength. The pupils have a strong sense of right and wrong, and respect for the religious and cultural traditions of other groups. They benefit from a wide range of visitors and the visits, for example to the Houses of Parliament and to museums and art galleries. Activities and themed days include a 'diversity day' to celebrate the faiths of all the pupils, residential visits which include meeting pupils from schools from across the United Kingdom and days to explore other countries. They use democratic processes to elect school councillors and have many other opportunities to develop leadership roles. As a result, pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The primary sports funding is well targeted and has extended the range of sports and equipment. Staff have had training from sports coaches to increase their skills. The wider range of physical education and

sports activities on offer ensures that girls and boys are developing new skills at a good rate and are increasing their involvement in competitive sport.

- The pupil premium funding has been allocated to provide additional staffing, professional support, parent workshops, enrichment and academic support in term time and during holidays. Assessments show that the achievement gap between these pupils and other pupils at the end of Year 2 and the end of Year 6 has not been consistently narrowed and in some areas has widened because all disadvantaged pupils are not yet making good or better progress.
- There has been no direct support from the local authority. Local authority officers have re-established contact this year. The school has been involved in visits to check the accuracy of assessments for Reception, Year 2 and Year 6.
- Rigorous attention to attendance and good links with parents are having a positive impact on attendance and punctuality. Attendance is now at national levels.
- Safeguarding practice is robust and meets statutory requirements. Parents, staff and pupils say that pupils are kept safe. Records and training are kept up to date.

The governance of the school:

- The governing body has been recently reconstituted in line with national changes. Governors have suitable skills, good links with the community and have high ambition for the pupils.
- Some required information is not available on the school's website, including the plan for spending pupil premium funding for this year and the report on the spending of sports funding. There is no information about the schemes used to develop phonics (the sounds that letters make), or reading. The information was available in school.
- Governors hold leaders to account for their work. They sometimes visit the school and invite leaders to speak to the governing body so that they have an understanding of the main issues that need to be addressed. However, they do not have a clear grasp of the progress of different groups of pupils.
- Governors have received training to understand published information about how the pupils have performed. As a result, they are increasing their understanding of where improvements are needed. The school improvement plan has identified the main areas that need attention. There are few precise targets within the plan that say what level of improvement is expected.
- The governors have developed strategies to find out about the quality of teaching through their visits and reports. They, alongside leaders, identified the improvement of writing as a key area for development for teaching across the school.
- Governors' performance management of the headteacher is in place and the systems for checking the performance of teachers, including the headteacher, have been improved and are linked to staff pay. Teachers' targets include whole-school priorities but they do not include precise targets for pupils' progress.
- The spending of additional sports funding is well planned and its impact is reviewed regularly. Although the expenditure of pupil premium funding is clearly allocated to activities, there are no specific improvement targets against which the impact of the funding can be readily measured.
- Governors' contribution to keeping children safe is good. Systems are secure.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. It is seen as a strength by parents, pupils, governors and staff.
- Good behaviour management systems, including targeted behaviour trackers, are in place. These are understood and valued by pupils and monitored and evaluated by senior leaders. Praise and incentives are

used to celebrate good behaviour.

- Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. Pupils work happily as individuals, in small groups and as a whole class. They come to class well prepared and ready to work. Occasionally pupils become less interested if the work is too easy or too difficult. At such times their progress slows down.
- Behaviour around the school and in the playground is good with pupils following staff's instructions quickly.
- Pupils know about different forms of bullying. They gave clear answers about what to do if an incident occurred. They said poor behaviour and bullying is rare and dealt with well. They talked about the success of the behaviour charts in use. They understood that in extreme cases behaviour could lead to exclusion.
- Pupils said that there is no homophobic or racist name-calling and that all children are looked after equally well. They are confident that if incidents were to occur they would be resolved quickly. Pupils value playground monitors. Children referee some of the games. They have other leadership roles such as elected members of the School Council.
- Attendance is steadily improving and is in line with national levels. There are good procedures for following up attendance and punctuality issues. Good incentives and awards reward good attendance and behaviour. Pupils learn to be responsible.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Heath Mount is a local authority 'beacon' school for health and safety. A governor and a union representative are engaged in reviews.
- Pupils have a thorough understanding about keeping safe in a range of situations, including e-safety, stranger danger, and fire and water safety. Children are kept safe at school, all policies are in place and each class has medical plans for individuals who need them.
- Safeguarding is good with all policies and training in place and practices secure. Vulnerable children are supported and cared for through good liaison with appropriate outside agencies to provide a 'team around the family'. Parents report that their children are safe at school. Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe and secure. Staff and governors are confident that children are kept safe.
- The subjects covered and the assembly programme help the pupils to develop self-confidence and social skills, and improve their awareness of their responsibility for their own safety and that of others.
- Pupils have a well-developed sense of right and wrong. They are sensitive to the feelings of others.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching is not consistently good. It does not enable pupils to make good progress, particularly in writing and mathematics. Pupils are not always given enough time to write extensively or to write for a variety of purposes. In mathematics, teachers do not always provide the right level of challenge to enable pupils to make good progress.
- Teachers are usually secure in their subject knowledge. Relationships in classrooms are good and the environment for learning is often stimulating. Some teachers use questioning skilfully to check understanding and to prompt deeper thinking and learning. However, sometimes the same work is set for all pupils and is too hard for some pupils and too easy for others. This limits the progress being made by pupils.
- Some teachers and teaching assistants worked well as a team, with each clearly sure of how to contribute to pupils' learning. When this was the case, lower ability pupils, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs made good progress.

- Inspectors examined pupils' work in a range of books across age-groups and abilities. Typically there was good attention to accuracy and presentation. The development of basic skills and knowledge were reinforced and consolidated. This is a key reason why Year 6 pupils reached good standards in the English, grammar, punctuation and spelling test last year.
- In mathematics, some work shows that pupils are expected to explain their reasoning, but this is not always the case. Expectations are not always high enough for the most able, some of whom are supported through the pupil premium or speak English as an additional language.
- Teachers' marking and the advice they give do not always help pupils to take their learning and understanding further. There are too few instances of marking pointing out what pupils should do to improve their work.
- There is evidence in classrooms of topic work leading to good learning. This is confirmed by pupils who talk about the learning experiences they enjoy most. Pupils appreciate it when teachers tell them what is to be accomplished and when marking helps them to move on with their learning. They also enjoy visits and visitors.
- When pupils are invited to read from familiar and unfamiliar books, they read well and with fluency. Sometimes they are able to read a book banded as more difficult by using their skills to work out unfamiliar words. Progress in reading is improving for most groups of pupils. Pupils told inspectors how they appreciate the opportunities to read at home. Parents too appreciate their involvement in supporting reading at home.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Year 6 standards in 2014 in writing fell below the levels of previous years. Pupils moved to secondary school with attainment overall in mathematics and reading at expected levels, but with writing below the expected level. However, the pupils' performance in English grammar, punctuation and spelling was above average.
- The proportion of Year 6 pupils attaining higher levels of attainment in writing was low.
- In 2014 disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 and those learning English as an additional language did less well than other Year 6 pupils in the school in mathematics, reading and writing.
- Disadvantaged pupils were about 2 terms behind in mathematics and writing and about 2.5 terms behind in reading. A lower proportion of these pupils achieved results at the expected or higher levels. In most cases gaps widened when compared with the position in 2013. The picture has subsequently improved in reading.
- Senior leaders' monitoring of pupil's work and the quality of teaching, verified by inspection evidence, shows that more of the current pupils in Year 6 are on track to achieve at the higher levels than in previous years in writing because staffing is more consistent and additional support is effective. Work examined across the school and in Year 6 books shows that standards in writing are recovering well from the fall in standards in writing in 2014. Disadvantaged pupils now make similar progress to other pupils in the school.
- The most-able Year 6 pupils in 2014 made good progress in reading and mathematics, but failed to make the expected progress in writing.
- At the end of Year 2, standards in reading and mathematics have steadily improved over the past three years. They are now average in reading and mathematics, but below average in writing. Disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs, and some pupils from minority ethnic heritages reached lower

standards than other Year 2 pupils in the school.

- At the end of Year 2, although disadvantaged pupils were between half a term and one term behind other pupils in mathematics and in writing, in reading they were about half a term ahead. By the end of Key Stage 1, attainment gaps narrowed compared with the position in 2013.
- In 2014, groups of pupils from a Pakistani heritage and those pupils learning English as an additional language reached similar levels of attainment to other pupils in the school in Years 2 and 6, and in the national phonics check at the end of Year 1.
- In Key Stage 2, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs receive appropriately targeted support. As a result most make the progress expected of them.
- There have been improvements in the teaching of reading that have led to a higher proportion of pupils meeting the expected standard in phonics in Year 1 last year. However, boys did less well than the girls and summer born children did less well, achieving below the national average. A lower proportion of disadvantaged pupils than other pupils in the school achieved the expected standard when retaking the test at the end of Year 2.
- The school's tracking information to the end of the autumn term in 2014 shows that the majority of pupils in Year 2 and in Year 6 are making at least expected progress. This is confirmed by the work seen in pupils' books, except for the most able where work is not always well matched to their capabilities. The school has planned a range of additional activities including workshops and small group work to help pupils who need to achieve higher levels in reading, writing or mathematics make faster progress.

The early years provision

requires improvement

- Children leave the early years provision with the proportion achieving a good level of development below the national average. The weakest area of achievement is literacy. This means some children are not fully prepared to make a success of learning in Year 1. However, children behave well and teachers and other staff ensure they are safe.
- The school's records show that, on entry, many children are at a stage of development in some of the areas that is below that typical of their age. This is particularly so in mathematics.
- The early years leader understands how well individual children are progressing in relation to their starting points. However, a close enough check is not made on the progress of different groups of children. This means that staff are not always able to quickly identify trends in the performance of different groups and modify the teaching and support. As a result, some groups of children do not make fast enough progress to reach the expected levels before they move into Year 1.
- Teaching is not consistently good. Sometimes there is a lack of challenge in the activities that children are given. This is because adults do not always give sufficient attention to what children can already do. Therefore, expectations are sometimes too low. Teachers have been doing focussed work on writing. This work shows that children are making better progress in letter formation, spacing and spelling. However, some of the sounding out of letters and words by adults is not always accurate.
- The breadth of learning opportunities supports children's personal development and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding well. For example, during the inspection children were learning about the Chinese New Year.
- The learning journals show clearly how well children achieve across the areas of learning, including the good impact seen on their progress in writing. Children who are learning English as an additional language, disabled children and those who have special educational needs receive appropriate additional

support. They make similar progress to other children.

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	103333
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	453256

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	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	420
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Graham Evans
Headteacher	Najma Chaudhary
Date of previous school inspection	17 October 2007
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