

Heath Mount Primary School

Knutsford Street, Balsall Heath, Birmingham, West Midlands B12 9SR

Inspection dates

18–19 June 2019

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Following the last inspection, pupils' outcomes declined. Over the past two years, too few pupils have reached the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics.
- As a result of teaching that does not meet pupils' learning needs sufficiently well, many pupils have gaps in their knowledge and skills. The legacy of underachievement has not yet been eradicated.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is not yet consistently good across the school.
- The school does not yet have its own governing body. This is currently under review.
- The current school development plan is overly long and does not have clear timescales for improvement.
- The most able pupils are not routinely challenged sufficiently in all classes. As a result, too few pupils currently reach the higher standards
- Expectations are still too low. Basic errors in spelling, handwriting and punctuation often go unchecked.
- The current curriculum lacks depth. Pupils do not fully develop their knowledge and understanding across a wide range of subjects.

The school has the following strengths

- The new headteacher is highly ambitious for the school. She leads with drive and determination. She has empowered other leaders and things are improving rapidly.
- Across the school, teaching is improving and pupils are making increased progress. Standards are rising.
- The teaching of phonics is effective and progress in reading is improving. As a result, more pupils are reaching the standards expected.
- Pupils get a good start to school. They make good progress in Reception.
- Pupils are polite and well mannered. They get along well with each other. They are proud of their school.
- Attendance is good. Pupils enjoy coming to school. Very few are absent from school.
- Arrangements to keep pupils safe are effective. Robust systems and procedures are now in place. Parents and carers say that their children are safe and well cared for at school.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve and strengthen the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - the current development plan is refined to create a long-term improvement plan for the school that has well defined and demanding actions, timescales and success criteria
 - recent improvements continue to be built upon so that the quality of teaching across the school is at least good and all pupils make even better progress
 - recently appointed middle leaders are supported to further develop the skills that they need to be effective in their roles across the whole school
 - a broad balanced curriculum is put in place to meet the needs of all pupils and engage them in their learning
 - a carefully managed transition from interim executive board (IEB) to new governing body takes place and new governors are supported to develop their skills in holding leaders fully to account.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment so that all pupils make at least good progress by ensuring that:
 - teachers are equipped with the necessary skills and acquire secure subject knowledge that will support them in delivering high-quality learning for all groups of pupils
 - all teachers plan a coherent teaching sequence over time which enables pupils to deepen and develop their skills and knowledge, building on prior learning
 - teachers consistently plan and set work that challenges all groups of pupils, including the most able pupils
 - teachers have high expectations of what pupils should know and can achieve in reading, writing and mathematics in order to maximise pupils' progress
 - all adults insist on the highest standards of presentation, spelling and punctuation in pupils' work across the curriculum and tackle errors and misconceptions at the earliest opportunity.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Following the last inspection, the quality of education offered at the school declined rapidly and outcomes fell dramatically. Interim leadership halted the decline and new school leaders are now ensuring that improvements are made quickly across the school. Since her appointment in September 2018, the new headteacher has worked to ensure that a shared vision is in place for the development of the school. There has been a significant turnaround in the school this academic year.
- As a consequence of the majority of staff also being new this year, developing a united staff team has been a key priority. Senior leaders have worked tirelessly to bring together the whole staff team. A positive ethos and culture are evident across the school. Staff morale is high and everyone works together to improve the education offered to all pupils.
- The headteacher is ambitious for the pupils and staff and knows that they can achieve much more. Through regular monitoring, senior leaders identify the strengths of the school and the areas that need improving. These are reflected in the current school development plan. However, self-evaluation is overgenerous and leaders have not yet clearly established the most pressing priorities for development. Concise measures of success and realistic timescales are not identified for each area. Consequently, plans are overly long and complicated. There is a danger of overload.
- The headteacher has empowered other senior and middle leaders. Despite many of these roles being new, clear roles and areas of responsibility have been established. Leaders check standards and support teachers in developing their skills and knowledge. The headteacher actively seeks external advice and expertise of the local authority and other local leaders of education to add capacity and to support her drive for improvement. While not yet fully embedded, the work of leaders at all levels is now playing a bigger part in driving the necessary improvements.
- Leaders are working hard to ensure a consistent approach across the school. New policies and procedures have been developed. The headteacher has introduced a rigorous approach to monitoring. This includes regular opportunities to observe teaching and looking at pupils' books. Expectations have been raised and the standards expected are discussed with individual teachers. Middle leaders provide support and coaching. It is too early to see the full impact of this monitoring as there are still inconsistencies in provision across the school.
- Leaders are beginning to review the curriculum on offer. The curriculum is limited and requires improvement. New approaches to the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics are being embedded and successfully engaging pupils of all ages. However, pupils' books show little evidence of work completed in subjects other than English and mathematics. For example, the teaching of subjects such as science and geography is patchy. As a result, pupils do not fully develop their knowledge and skills across a wide range of subjects.
- The introduction of the new school values – honesty, equality, aspiration, respect and teamwork – is helping pupils reflect on their own attitudes and abilities. They are seen

as the heart of the school and referred to by adults and pupils alike. Strong links with British values are made and pupils talk with a deepening understanding about tolerance, democracy and mutual respect. The school's work to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school.

- Support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is improving. The leader for this area is having a greater impact since the arrival of the new headteacher. Additional funding is used to provide appropriate support. Pupils' progress is tracked and the leader monitors the impact of the support carefully. Leaders are further refining the identification of pupils with SEND to ensure that pupils with a clear and specific need are on the register.
- Leaders identify barriers to learning for disadvantaged pupils. Additional funding is used to provide support for learning. Pupils receive support and encouragement from all staff. As a result, disadvantaged pupils are making better progress.
- Specific funds for school physical education and sport are put to good use. Staff, including a qualified sports coach, encourage pupils to be more active. Pupils benefit from a range of clubs such as basketball and cricket. They enjoy participating in local sporting competitions. Health and well-being are held in high regard and promoted by all staff. More pupils are now participating in a range of sporting activities.
- The vast majority of parents are supportive of the school. They say that their children are happy and enjoy coming to school. All the parents who spoke to the inspection team commented on the positive changes since the arrival of the new headteacher. They note the improved behaviour and higher expectations, stating that the school is 'positively buzzing this year'. They recognise that there is work still to be done but are confident in the new leadership taking the school in the right direction.
- The school receives good support from the Birmingham Education Partnership, commissioned by the local authority. The link adviser knows the school well and is working closely with the headteacher to further refine the school development plan. The opportunity to participate in a project for schools yet to be good is welcomed by school leaders. The support and challenge provided are effective.

Governance of the school

- The governing body in place at the time of the last inspection no longer operates. An IEB was established in January 2018 to oversee the school's improvement.
- Members of the IEB are suitably experienced. Many are currently serving practitioners. They bring a wealth of skills and expertise which they use to support and challenge leaders appropriately. Minutes of their meetings indicate the range of questions they use to check the work of leaders over time.
- The IEB continues to work closely with a range of local authority officers to resolve historical personnel and financial issues faced by the school. This work is ongoing and part of the reason why the school has yet to form its own governing body. Following the appointment of a permanent headteacher and other senior leaders, initial discussions are under way to establish a new local governing body this year. The local authority and IEB are working together to ensure a smooth transition.
- Members of the IEB understand their responsibilities for keeping children safe at

school. Minutes show that they regularly discuss safeguarding issues and check that procedures are followed appropriately. They are trained according to the latest government guidance.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The new headteacher is tenacious in her approach to keeping children safe. The designated safeguarding leaders are similarly determined. They check to ensure that recently reviewed policies and procedures are followed by all staff. Detailed and accurate records are kept and any concern about a child is followed up quickly. Timely action is taken to support vulnerable children and their families. Leaders are very clear about their duty of care.
- Staff access regular training, including the 'Prevent' duty, forced marriage and child sexual exploitation. The designated safeguarding leaders have a comprehensive knowledge of local issues. All staff understand their roles and responsibilities for keeping children safe. They are vigilant and know what to do if they have a concern about a child.
- Procedures for the recruitment and vetting of staff are effective. The single central record is well managed and regularly checked by senior leaders.
- Pupils are confident that the school is a safe place. Opportunities for pupils to learn how to keep themselves safe are threaded through the curriculum. They understand how important it is not to share personal information on the internet. Local community police officers help pupils learn how to deal with tricky situations when they are not at school. Parents comment that their children are safe at school, with the new headteacher praised for making the school 'a safer place to be'.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection. There is much that is good but there remain inconsistencies across the school.
- In the past, expectations of what pupils could achieve were too low. Weaknesses in the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics led to low achievement for many pupils by the end of key stages 1 and 2. As a consequence, there are now gaps in some pupils' knowledge and understanding. The new headteacher and her senior team have raised teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve.
- The standard of teaching is still variable across the school. Senior leaders have an accurate view of teaching and are clear about where improvements are needed. Coaching and support are provided to help teachers improve their teaching, with the aim of it being good in every class. While teaching is improving, the improvements are not yet embedded in practice or consistent across the school.
- Expectations are still too low, given the starting points for the majority of pupils. Simple mistakes in spelling, handwriting and punctuation are not routinely picked up. Pupils are not consistently challenged to refine and improve their work. Often errors and misconceptions go unchecked and pupils continue to make the same mistakes.

Consequently, many pupils are still not producing the work of which they are capable. The new headteacher is supporting staff to expect more from all pupils.

- Where teaching is stronger, there is an effective match of work to pupils' abilities. This is not the case across the whole school, however. Some pupils are not routinely challenged or encouraged to work independently, especially the most able pupils. In other situations, pupils are not moved on quickly enough, even though they understand what they are learning to do. This limits the progress these pupils make.
- Subject-specific training is helping teachers plan a more effective sequence of learning built on pupils' prior knowledge. For example, in mathematics, a more consistent approach is being developed using pupils' number knowledge. Many teachers use questions effectively to help pupils make connections and develop better reasoning skills. Pupils are encouraged to explain and prove what they are thinking. This is helping to engage pupils in their learning and deepen their understanding.
- The teaching of reading is improving. Pupils enjoy reading. They talk about what they are reading and, by the end of key stage 2, use expression to bring their reading alive. Following training, a new approach to guided reading is being used across the school. This is providing more regular opportunities for pupils to read. Teachers ensure that pupils build on prior learning. Specific reading skills are taught explicitly. However, it is too early to fully measure the impact of this new approach.
- Teachers support pupils to develop their vocabulary across the curriculum. They use questions to check what pupils already know and encourage them to find alternative words to express themselves. As a result of such discussions, pupils' speaking and listening skills are developing strongly. Many pupils are articulate and confident and express themselves clearly.
- The teaching of writing is improving. Over time, pupils develop the stamina to write interesting extended pieces, demonstrating a growing accuracy in their grammar and vocabulary choices. This is particularly the case in upper key stage 2, where pupils' work shows that they have a clear sense of the purpose behind their writing. This is not yet fully developed across the school.
- Some teachers are skilled in encouraging pupils to reflect on their work. Pupils are beginning to think carefully about what they are learning to do. They talk with their partner to spot what went well and identify where they get stuck. They offer constructive criticism in a supportive atmosphere. Pupils are developing the language of learning.
- Relationships between adults and pupils are positive and productive. Adults encourage and reward pupils appropriately. Pupils cooperate and work well together.
- Additional adults ensure that all pupils are included successfully. They support and encourage, while adapting instructions so that pupils with additional needs can be successful. Classrooms are inclusive.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are articulate and confident. They are keen to talk about their work. Pupils listen carefully to adults and to one another. In class, pupils work well and cooperate with each other. They treat one another as equals. Respectful relationships are evident across the school.
- Pupils who spoke to the inspectors said that they enjoy coming to school and feel safe. Pupils understand the different forms of bullying, such as cyber bullying, and know that it is not acceptable. They say that there is very little bullying at school and, when it does happen, they are confident that it will be quickly dealt with.
- Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe both in and out of school. They learn to take risks in a safe environment and staff use every opportunity to discuss safety with them.
- Pupils have opportunities to develop responsibility in a number of roles across the school. During the inspection, older pupils were observed organising lunchtime games for younger pupils and delivering the breakfast bagels. They take these roles seriously and work hard to be good role models for other pupils.
- The school values of honesty, equality, aspiration, respect and teamwork are embedded in all aspects of the school's provision. They are at the heart of the school. Pupils understand these values and spot them in action. Pupils are keen to help others and organise a range of charitable events. Pupils have a deep sense of care and moral obligation towards others less fortunate than themselves.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Parents who spoke to inspectors commented on the improved behaviour in the school since the arrival of the new headteacher.
- Pupils are polite and courteous towards adults and each other. They hold doors open and use their manners appropriately. They conduct themselves sensibly in school and line up quickly at the end of breaktimes. Pupils ensure that visitors to the school are welcomed. For example, they offer a handshake and say, 'Good morning.' Standards of behaviour around the school are good.
- Behaviour in classrooms is good. Pupils concentrate hard and apply themselves enthusiastically to their learning. They cooperate well when working in pairs or small groups. They listen carefully to each other and offer suggestions to improve one another's work. Classrooms are calm and focused on learning.
- Playtimes and lunchtimes are happy, sociable occasions. Pupils sit and chat together. They welcome the opportunity to spend time with their friends. They clear away after themselves. Older pupils organise a range of activities on the playground, such as cricket, hurdles and basketball. Appropriate supervision ensures that any issue is dealt with quickly and sensitively. Pupils manage their own behaviour very well.
- Adults ensure that the behaviour policy is applied consistently, and pupils understand

what is expected. Pupils enjoy collecting class rewards and exchanging them for activities, such as a visit to the art room or a film session. Opportunities to reflect provide time for pupils to think when things go wrong. Pupils are encouraged and supported to take responsibility for their own behaviour.

- Pupils enjoy coming to school. Attendance is higher than the national average and very few pupils are persistently absent. Leaders support pupils who are regularly late to school by helping families organise their morning routines and providing an alarm clock. As a result, more pupils arrive at school on time every day.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Following the last inspection in 2017, outcomes across the school fell significantly. In 2017, just over a third of pupils reached the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2. New leaders have halted the decline and made sure that the progress current pupils make is much stronger.
- Higher expectations are helping pupils make stronger progress in many classes. However, progress is not yet consistently strong across the school, and there is a legacy of underachievement that current leaders are still addressing.
- School assessment information indicates that attainment at the end of key stage 1 remains below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. However, the current Year 2 pupils have made strong progress from their low starting points. In 2017, at the end of the early years foundation stage, only 32% of this group of pupils reached a good level of development. Now more than 50% are reaching the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Attainment at the end of key stage 2 has been well below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics for the last two years. As a result of higher expectations from new leaders and improvements in the quality of teaching, rates of progress for current key stage 2 pupils have increased. Work in pupils' books and the school checks on learning show that pupils are now making better progress in these core subjects. Leaders work closely with Year 6 teachers to promote high expectations and provide additional support for pupils, many of whom have gaps in their learning from previous weaknesses in teaching. The work of current Year 6 pupils and recent teacher assessments show improvements this year.
- More pupils are reaching age-related expectations in reading by the end of Year 6 than they have done in the recent past. More opportunities for reading and focused teaching of key reading skills, such as inference, summarising and analysing, are having a positive impact on pupils' outcomes. More pupils are being supported to reach greater depth than previously. All staff are working effectively to raise the profile of reading.
- Progress in writing is improving strongly. The introduction of a new approach to the teaching of writing is ensuring greater consistency and higher expectations across the school. Teachers support pupils effectively to develop their vocabulary and sentence structure.
- Over the last three years, progress in mathematics across key stage 2 has declined. However, this decline has now been halted and the workbooks of current pupils show that they are making better progress. This is a result of a new approach to the

teaching of mathematics. Pupils have many more opportunities to secure their understanding of key number facts and use and apply their skills and knowledge.

- Not enough pupils achieve higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 2. New leaders are working with staff to develop higher expectations and greater challenge. While these aspects are improving quickly, leaders acknowledge that there is more to be done to secure higher standards, particularly for the most able pupils.
- The proportion of pupils who reach the expected standard in the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1 has risen over the last two years. School assessment information indicates that further improvements have been made this year. Although still below national averages, more pupils are reaching the required standard.
- Work in pupils' books indicates that progress and outcomes in other subject areas, such as history, geography and science, are not yet as strong. This is because the wider curriculum is not yet fully embedded in all classes.
- Leaders carefully track pupils' progress and quickly identify those who are in danger of being left behind. Pupils with additional needs or those who are disadvantaged are supported in class, individually and in groups. Appropriate support helps these pupils make better progress and many are now catching up with their peers.

Early years provision

Good

- Leaders have improved the provision for the youngest children that was in place at the time of the last inspection. The learning environment provides a range of stimulating opportunities for children to explore, create and discover, inside and outside.
- Outcomes at the end of the early years have improved significantly. Children enter the Reception class with skills and abilities below those typical for their age. As a result of better provision and higher expectations, the proportion reaching a good level of development has risen from 32% to 60%. More children are now prepared for their move to Year 1.
- The leadership of the early years is strong. Although the leader is relatively new to her post, she is skilled and knowledgeable about how young children learn. She has a secure understanding of the setting's effectiveness. Her action plan is robust and focused on making sure that children's early development improves further.
- Teaching has improved and is good in the early years. Leaders ensure that regular observations and assessments of children's abilities inform teaching and learning.
- Adults ensure that the learning environment engages children in activities they find enjoyable and interesting. For example, children enjoy hiding gems from 'moody pirates'. They enjoy creating their own stories about the 'rainbow fish' and talk about friends helping when you feel sad.
- Many pupils enter the Reception class with limited fine motor skills. Adults ensure that children have many opportunities to develop their physical ability to hold a pencil and to write. Children are supported and encouraged to develop an appropriate pencil grip. As a result, children quickly develop the skills to write independently.
- The teaching of phonics in the Reception class is effective. Children repeat sounds

which are modelled clearly by adults. They make links between the letters and the sounds that they make. They suggest words which link to the sound and practise saying them. Adults encourage children to use their phonics when reading and writing independently.

- Adults ask questions and encourage children to talk and describe what they are doing. Weekly sessions led by a speech therapist ensure that those struggling with language and communication receive tailored support. At times, however, opportunities are missed to deepen children's understanding and secure stronger progress.
- Behaviour is good and children cooperate well. They listen to each other's ideas and share equipment. They develop confidence and an ability to concentrate for longer periods of time. Children understand what is expected and follow routines independently. Relationships are positive in the early years.
- Links with parents are effective. Entry into school is carefully planned and children and their families are well prepared for starting school. Visits to local pre-schools and nurseries, as well as meetings with parents, ensure that important information is shared.
- All statutory requirements for safeguarding and health and safety are met. Parents are confident that their children are well cared for and safe.

School details

Unique reference number	103333
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10088469

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	401
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of interim executive board	Nadeem Bashir
Headteacher	Deborah Fance
Telephone number	0121 464 1691
Website	www.heathmount.bham.sch.uk/
Email address	d.fance@heathmount.bham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	21–22 March 2017

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- A new headteacher and a large majority of teachers joined the school in September 2018.
- In January 2017, an IEB was established by the local authority and currently oversees the work of the school.
- A large majority of pupils are from minority ethnic groups and most of these pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is much higher than that found nationally.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is above average.
- The school does not have a Nursery. The early years foundation stage consists of two full-time Reception classes.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and other key leaders. The lead inspector spoke with two members of the IEB, including the chair. The lead inspector met with two representatives from the local authority.
- Inspectors made visits to classrooms on both days of the inspection. Many of these visits were made jointly with the headteacher or assistant headteacher.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide selection of pupils' workbooks from different subjects.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils formally and informally. A group of pupils met with inspectors to discuss a range of issues. Pupils read to the inspectors. Inspectors observed behaviour in classrooms, in corridors, at lunchtime and outside on the playground.
- Inspectors talked to parents before school. The lead inspector considered the eight responses received to the free-text service.
- The lead inspector considered the individual response to Ofsted's staff questionnaire.
- Various school documents were scrutinised, including the school development plan, records of monitoring, reports to governors and minutes of their meetings. Information about pupils' progress, behaviour, attendance and safety was also analysed and discussed with leaders.
- Documents relating to safeguarding were checked and an inspector looked at published information on the school's website.

Inspection team

Nicola Harwood, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Karen O'Keefe	Ofsted Inspector
Justine Lomas	Ofsted Inspector

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