

Highcliffe Primary School and Community Centre

Greengate Lane, Birstall, Leicester, Leicestershire LE4 3DL

Inspection dates

21–22 March 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The experienced executive headteacher and the dedicated head of school provide strong leadership and have secured considerable improvement since being appointed.
- Trustees and governors are skilled and knowledgeable. The academy trust and governing body provide a high level of support and challenge to the school which has helped to improve standards.
- Leaders check and support the work of adults in the school effectively. The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good. The support leaders provide is not as targeted as it could be, however, to help individual teachers improve their practice.
- Pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Disadvantaged pupils are well supported and are making faster progress than they have done previously.
- Subject leaders play a valuable role in strengthening the quality of teaching and learning. Their work does not yet link sufficiently well to pupils' progress, however.
- Teachers plan activities that match the needs of different pupils. However, the most able pupils do not consistently make the progress they should. Sometimes, pupils are slow to practise their skills, especially in writing.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes towards their learning are good and often exemplary. Pupils are polite and show great consideration and respect towards adults and each other. They are safe and say they feel safe.
- Leaders provide a range of additional support for pupils who fall behind. The effectiveness of the support is not checked or evaluated well enough, however, to know which additional help is having the most beneficial effect on pupils' progress.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are making good progress from their different starting points. The systems the school uses to measure this progress for all pupils are not sufficiently well developed, however.
- Pupils experience a broad and balanced curriculum. Senior leaders and the governing body do not yet have a thorough understanding, however, of the progress pupils make across different subjects.
- Children make good progress in the early years and attain standards which are above those expected nationally. The progress of children who enter the school with more developed skills, however, is not as rapid as others in the school. Mathematical skills are not being developed as thoroughly as literacy skills.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - senior leaders evaluate the programmes introduced to accelerate pupils' progress to check how effective they have been in improving standards
 - leaders at all levels make better use of the school's tracking system to check how much progress pupils from different groups are making from their different starting points and identify quickly any changes in teaching which may be required
 - subject leaders place greater focus on supporting senior leaders in driving forward whole-school improvement
 - senior leaders gain a firm understanding of the progress pupils make in a range of different subjects.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that:
 - teachers consistently provide timely opportunities for pupils to practise their writing skills
 - teachers plan more work that challenges higher-attaining pupils
 - leaders tailor teachers' professional development targets so that they are specific in setting out each teacher's own needs and how they are met.
- Improve the provision in the early years by all staff:
 - routinely providing learning opportunities for children to develop their mathematical skills, as they do in literacy
 - challenging the most able children to deepen their learning and accelerate their progress.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Senior leaders, the governing body and the academy trust have a clear vision for the school's improvement. Expectations are high across the school. Strong leadership from the executive headteacher and head of school has improved the quality of teaching in the school and raised pupils' achievement within a short period of time.
- The academy trust provides high-quality support and challenge for the school's leaders. The school works closely with other schools in the academy trust and through a teaching school alliance to share and develop good practice.
- Leaders have set out a suitable approach to understanding of the new national curriculum in English and mathematics, and to assessing pupils' attainment in both subjects. Accurate assessments inform teachers about how well pupils are doing. The accuracy of these assessments is checked against those of other schools to ensure their reliability.
- The head of school has worked successfully to improve communication with parents and carers. Views from Ofsted's online survey (Parent View), the school's own parental surveys and parents spoken with during the inspection all indicate that parents are appreciative of the work of leaders and other school staff.
- Leaders' understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses is accurate. They have not been afraid to tackle difficult issues to ensure that pupils receive a high-quality education. Procedures for holding staff to account for pupils' progress are now robust. Professional development to improve weaker teaching has been effective. Targets used to help teachers develop their individual practice are not, however, as tailored as they need to be to improve the quality of teaching further.
- Subject leaders take an active role in leading improvements in their subjects. They are well supported by senior leaders and have access to other networking opportunities to aid their personal development. Subject leaders provide support for other staff and monitor the quality of their curriculum areas, but they do not yet support senior leaders well enough in driving forward whole-school improvement.
- The school's curriculum is broad and balanced. Pupils have access to a range of different subjects, including music, French and Mandarin. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is woven into the curriculum. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. Senior leaders do not yet have an accurate view of the progress pupils make in their different subjects, however, so that they can identify any additional support or challenge the pupils may need.
- Senior leaders and governors have placed a higher priority than previously on raising standards among disadvantaged pupils. Funding is used to provide a range of individual support programmes for these pupils so that they can catch up from any identified underachievement. Disadvantaged pupils are now making faster progress in most year groups. Leaders have yet to establish, however, which additional programmes are making the most difference in raising pupils' outcomes.

- The additional funding provided to support pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is used effectively. It provides tailored support to help pupils reach their individual targets.
- The school uses the additional physical education and sport funding to make a positive difference to pupils' participation in, and enjoyment of, physical activity. It is also used to support positive attitudes to health and well-being. Specialist coaches bring a high level of expertise to the school.

Governance of the school

- The governing body has taken decisive action to ensure the continued improvement of Highcliffe Primary School. The academy trust has provided additional support to drive forward the changes needed to improve the school.
- Better reporting practices have improved the quality of information provided to the governing body and this, together with governors' own checks on what they are being told, has strengthened the view they have of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Governors use this increased knowledge to ask challenging questions. In this way, the governing body is holding leaders to account for the school's performance. Governors have improved the way in which teachers' effectiveness is checked and how they are rewarded with pay increases.
- The governing body checks the overall progress being made by pupils throughout the school in an increasingly sophisticated manner. It does not have a clear enough understanding of the progress different groups of pupils make, however, from their different starting points. They are not yet able to measure the impact of any additional support the pupils receive.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Checks to ensure the suitability of staff and volunteers have been carried out correctly.
- Groups of pupils who spoke with inspectors said that they feel safe in the school and that they know adults care for them. The curriculum contributes to raising pupils' awareness of safe practices, such as e-safety and road safety. Parents who responded to the Ofsted's online survey and the school's own surveys, and those who were spoken with during the inspection, agreed that their children are safe and well cared for.
- The designated teacher for child protection and safeguarding ensures that procedures are implemented robustly and that records are detailed and well maintained. Staff are trained effectively and understand the correct procedures to follow, including those associated with radicalisation and extremism. Partnership working with parents and external agencies is effective in making sure that all pupils are supported and are safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Leaders have been successful in improving the quality of teaching. Teaching, learning and assessment are now good, and this enables pupils to make good progress.
- Pupils show positive attitudes towards their learning as a result of teachers' high expectations. Teachers plan lessons which capture pupils' imagination and hold their interest. For example, pupils in Year 4 gasped with excitement and were eager to contribute to their lesson on crime and punishment.
- Teachers display good subject knowledge. This is used to model learning effectively and support pupils in understanding new concepts. This was observed to be working successfully in mathematics where pupils in Year 2 were using technical terms to support their explanations of cumulative multiplication.
- The teaching of phonics is strong. Inspectors heard pupils of different abilities read and found that they use their phonics skills well when reading difficult words. Pupils read fluently and confidently. The most able pupils read with expression and intonation. All pupils expressed their love of reading.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and other pupils who need additional support are provided with small-group and one-to-one teaching to help them catch up. The work of teaching assistants is increasingly effective, with clear plans to support the pupils they are working with.
- Teachers' questioning usually promotes pupils' learning effectively, stimulating their thinking and developing their reasoning skills. For example, in a mathematics lesson on arrays, pupils in Year 2 were asked to explain why they thought their answers were correct. In a lesson on prepositions, however, questioning did not give pupils in Year 6 sufficient time to demonstrate their understanding.
- Teachers provide a range of different approaches to learning and plan work that is well matched to pupils' abilities. Pupils in Year 5, for example, were provided with project work which incorporated the use of mathematical skills at different levels of ability. Teachers do not challenge the most able pupils consistently, however. For example, in a writing lesson, pupils in Year 4 were slow to develop their sentence structure as they had to wait for others to do the same work before moving on.
- Teachers pay good attention to developing pupils' writing. Pupils' books show that they write regularly, using appropriate grammatical features and varied vocabulary. Writing is presented carefully in pupils' workbooks. Opportunities for pupils to write, however, are not always timely. Pupils in Year 5 spent too much time on discussion and planning rather than actually writing the story.
- Teachers set homework which helps to improve pupils' skills. Homework is varied and is consistently used to reinforce and consolidate learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Leaders have ensured that the curriculum develops pupils academically, emotionally

and socially. For example, the school's values of respect, resilience, resourcefulness, responsibility and reflection provide a focus during lessons and assemblies. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development benefits from opportunities to learn about different religious festivals. Pupils do not, however, have enough opportunities to interact with cultures different to their own.

- The school's records show that bullying and racist incidents are very rare. Most pupils know about different forms of bullying and racism. Pupils told inspectors that bullying was rare and that they trust adults to follow up on any behaviour that does not meet the standards set. The vast majority of parents agree with this.
- Pupils have access to a range of clubs and other activities to help them develop important additional skills. For example, they attend clubs in music, dance and drawing, and are able to take on responsibilities, such as house captain.
- Pupils are taught how to keep safe and healthy. Pupils who spoke with inspectors were clear that they are well cared for. Pupils have a good understanding of e-safety and how to keep themselves safe when using technology. Parents agree that their children are safe and well cared for.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are welcoming, polite and courteous to each other and to adults. Pupils' conduct is good, and often exemplary, at playtimes, during assemblies and around the school site. Pupils take pride in their work and in their school.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and engage positively in their learning. Transitions between activities are smooth and swift so that there is little disruption to learning. Pupils' behaviour has a good impact on their learning. In a few lessons, however, some pupils occasionally lose focus on their learning and need to be reminded to concentrate on their work.
- Pupils' attendance is above average. However, the rate of attendance of disadvantaged pupils is below average nationally and well below other pupils in the school. The school is working with these pupils and their families to improve the attendance of this group of pupils, but actions taken to reduce the number of absences are not yet effective enough.
- Pupils and parents agree that behaviour is good. A few parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey did not agree, however. Inspectors did not find their concerns to be well founded.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils make good progress in all year groups as a result of good teaching and strong leadership. Pupils are prepared well for the next stage of their education.
- Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 2 was broadly average in 2016. The school's assessment information for current pupils in key stage 1 indicates that the number of pupils set to reach age-related standards in reading, writing and mathematics is above the national average. The proportion of pupils attaining a greater depth of learning is increasing but it remains below the national average in some year groups.

- The number of pupils in Year 1 reaching the expected standard in the phonics screening checks increased significantly in 2016, and was above the national average. The school's tracking system indicates current pupils in Year 1 will do similarly well. Disadvantaged pupils are making particularly good progress in their phonics skills development.
- Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6 was broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics in 2016. Pupils made good progress in reading and mathematics and some made rapid progress in mathematics and achieved at greater depth. The school's assessment information for current pupils in key stage 2 indicates that the number of pupils set to attain national expectations and make good progress in reading and mathematics is above average. In 2016, pupils' progress in writing fell below the national average. Leaders have taken swift and effective action to improve the quality of teaching of writing. Current assessment information indicates that pupils in almost all the different year groups are now making good progress in writing and are set to achieve at least the national expectations.
- The school's use of the pupil premium funding for raising disadvantaged pupils' achievement is effective. Disadvantaged pupils, including those who are most able, are making rapid progress and many are reaching the same high standards as other pupils nationally.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress towards their individual targets. The pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress. The historical difference in the achievement of boys and girls in the school has reduced. Most higher-attaining pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Some inconsistencies remain, however, in different year groups and in the proportions of the most able pupils who are reaching the higher standards.
- Pupils make slower progress in science than in English and mathematics. Senior leaders do not check assessment information in other subjects well enough to know what progress pupils are making and to determine what additional support or challenge they may need.

Early years provision

Good

- The early years provision is enthusiastically and competently led and managed. A high proportion of children join the school with skill levels that are typical for their age. Some join with skills above those typical for their age. Leaders have ensured that all children make good progress in their learning and development. Children are well prepared for entry into Year 1.
- Leaders are skilled at identifying the needs of children. Adults use assessment information effectively to plan activities which capture children's imagination. The children are keen to participate in their learning. This was observed when a small group of boys were using masks to retell the story of the three little pigs.
- Phonics teaching is effective and is reinforced through other elements of learning. For example, adults modelled words identified from pupils' drawings during a group activity. Literacy skill development is routinely built into daily activities. Adults interact with the children to strengthen their writing and use good questioning to extend

children's vocabulary. Opportunities to support and develop mathematical skills, however, are not yet built into children's learning to the same extent.

- The school provides a rich learning environment which has a positive impact on children's learning. The curriculum meets the needs of the children and provides exciting learning opportunities. Pupils particularly enjoy the outdoor area because they have the opportunity to choose activities that interest them.
- Children's behaviour is good. Adults reinforce the school's values by discussing them during each of the activities they engage in. Children play and cooperate with each other and learn well together. They sustain focus and concentration for a considerable time because they enjoy, and are relaxed in, their play. Inspectors observed children playing board games together, for example, and sharing and talking about their paintings.
- Teachers deploy other adults effectively. Additional support is well targeted and has a positive impact on pupils' learning and development. The pupil premium funding is used effectively in the Reception Year. Disadvantaged children make good progress in each of their learning goals. Children who enter the school with skills above those typical for their age, however, do not make the same progress as other pupils in the school.
- Partnerships with parents are very strong. Parents are involved in their children's transition to the school and are kept informed through the use of an electronic tracking and reporting system and open lines of communication. Partnerships with external agencies are used well to provide individualised, high-quality support where it is needed.
- Adults working in the school take care to ensure that children are kept safe. Safeguarding is effective in the early years. Parents are confident that their child is safe.

School details

Unique reference number	140725
Local authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	10023066

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	416
Appropriate authority	Academy trust
Chair	Shreekant Raivadera
Headteacher	Scott Fewster (executive headteacher) Katherine Renshaw (head of school)
Telephone number	01162 101112
Website	www.highcliffeacademy.org.uk
Email address	office@highcliffeacademy.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Highcliffe Primary School and Community Centre converted to become an academy school on 1 April 2014. When its predecessor school, also called Highcliffe Primary School and Community Centre, was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to be satisfactory overall.
- The school is sponsored by Lionheart Academies Trust. It is also part of the Oadby Learning Partnership.
- Highcliffe Primary is larger than the average-sized primary school. There are two classes in each year group. The executive headteacher and head of school have been in post since January 2016.
- A little over half of the pupils are from White British backgrounds, and a third are of Indian heritage.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is well below average.

- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. The proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is below average.
- In 2016, the school met the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- The school's breakfast club is run by a different provider and is subject to a separate inspection.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils' learning in 24 lessons. Some of this learning was observed together with senior leaders.
- Discussions took place with school staff, members of the governing body and representatives from the trust.
- The inspectors met with three groups of pupils and talked to pupils informally. Inspectors observed assembly and playtime and also listened to Year 2 and Year 6 pupils reading.
- The 16 surveys completed by staff and the 88 responses submitted by parents to Ofsted's online survey (Parent View), including the 38 free-text responses, were taken into account. Inspectors spoke informally with parents at the beginning of the school day and reviewed the school's own surveys.
- Inspectors observed the work of the school and looked at a broad range of evidence, including: the school's analysis of its strengths and weaknesses; planning and monitoring documentation; the work in pupils' books; records relating to attendance and behaviour; and the school's own information on pupils' current attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school's child protection and safeguarding procedures were scrutinised. A review of the school's website was made to check whether it met the requirements on the publication of statutory information.

Inspection team

Vondra Mays, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Jane Burton	Ofsted Inspector
Christopher Mansell	Ofsted Inspector
Andrew Lakatos	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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