

# Inspection of Hawthorn Primary School

Hawthorn Road, Kingstanding, Birmingham, West Midlands B44 8QR

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Inspection dates: 16 and 17 November 2021

## **Overall effectiveness**

## **Requires improvement**

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The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Good**

Personal development

**Good**

Leadership and management

**Requires improvement**

Early years provision

**Requires improvement**

Previous inspection grade

Good under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

The headteacher has created a united staff team. Collectively, staff have worked hard to address weaknesses in pupils' basic skills and raise achievement. This has been successful in mathematics and some aspects of writing. However, some pupils still struggle with reading because they do not get the support they need to catch up quickly. The curriculum is quite new and leaders are still considering how to check how well pupils are doing in different subjects.

Pupils are happy and feel safe at school. They are well cared for, and work and play together cheerfully. Leaders want the best for pupils and have raised expectations. As a result, pupils are achieving better and behaviour has improved.

Pupils know and follow the school's behaviour policy. They work hard and enjoy lessons. Where disputes arise, adults deal with these quickly. This includes any incidents of bullying. Pupils learn about discrimination and know that it is wrong.

Leaders provide high levels of support for vulnerable pupils and their families. They are also very mindful of pupils with emotional needs and those with high levels of anxiety. The school dog, Bailey, is popular with pupils and helps pupils to relax and express their feelings.

## **What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?**

Leaders are committed to providing a high standard of education. They have redesigned the curriculum. Leaders have prioritised English and mathematics, and both subjects are now well structured so pupils build their knowledge and skills gradually. Most other subjects are at an earlier stage of development. Plans are in place, but staff have only recently begun to teach some of the newer content. Many subject leaders are also very new to their roles. They have had little training and limited time to check and appraise their subject areas. It is therefore too early to determine how effective some subject plans are.

Children in the early years settle quickly due to the good-quality care and support that staff provide. Children behave well, take turns and share equipment. Adults promote good speaking and listening skills from the outset. They encourage children to keep trying when they find things difficult. Children enjoy the exciting activities planned, especially outdoors. However, teachers have not identified precisely what vocabulary and knowledge they want children to know by the end of Reception Year. This means that staff in key stage 1 cannot build on this successfully.

Staff assess pupils regularly in English, mathematics and phonics. They use the information gathered to adjust pupil groups and match work to their respective abilities. However, leaders have yet to finalise their expectations about checking how well pupils are achieving in other subjects, such as music and geography. This means that teachers do not know which pupils need additional support or where further input is required in the wider curriculum.

Leaders have prioritised reading across the school. Children in the early years visit the local library each week to gain an early love of books. All classes read daily in school and reading quizzes check that pupils have the right level books. Children get off to a good start with phonics in the early years. However, some pupils in Years 1 and 2 do not apply their phonic skills when they find words difficult. These children do not receive enough support to help them become confident and fluent readers and catch up quickly.

Provision for pupils in the hearing-impaired resource base is strong. The leader has a strong grasp of pupils' needs. Staff check pupils' learning regularly and use this information to provide effective support. Specialist support is sought and provided where needed so that pupils with the most complex needs are fully included in all learning. Consequently, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress.

Leaders have worked hard and been successful in improving pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning. Many pupils say that they particularly enjoy mathematics and can get on with their work without disruption.

Pupils' personal development is well supported. Staff have a detailed knowledge of pupils and their needs. Effective pastoral support is provided. Pupils speak fondly of going to 'The Den' where they feel safe. Pupils benefit from the musical, sporting and creative opportunities that the school offers. These help develop their interests and support their academic learning.

Staff have very positive views of the school. They report that leaders are approachable and mindful of their workload.

Governors provide good levels of the support and challenge. They ask probing questions in meetings. They meet with staff, visit the school and hear pupils read. This gives them first-hand knowledge of the school.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make sure that staff receive up-to-date training so that they can identify and report any concerns correctly. Leaders conscientiously follow up these concerns. They provide school support or make referrals to the appropriate authorities so that pupils are safe. Leaders check that staff employed are suitable and eligible to work with children.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe in lessons and assemblies. They have a good understanding of e-safety and the importance of not sharing personal information online. They learn about road safety, appropriate relationships and who to report to if they have any worries.

## What does the school need to do to improve?

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Curriculum development in the foundation subjects is still at an early stage. Plans have been created by leaders, but staff have only recently begun to implement some of these. Leaders have not yet had the opportunity to determine whether the curriculum is being implemented as intended and its impact on pupils. Leaders should review and evaluate the taught curriculum and check that plans are being delivered as intended and that it is having a positive impact on pupil outcomes.
- Some subject leaders are new to their roles. To date, they have had limited management time or training in their respective areas to provide support and challenge to their colleagues. Leaders should ensure that all subject leaders have the training and skills needed to monitor and evaluate curriculum implementation and assess the impact on pupils' learning.
- Teachers in the early years plan activities that children enjoy and help them develop their early skills. However, they have not considered what explicit knowledge and subject vocabulary they want children to learn. This means that staff in key stage 1 cannot build effectively on prior content and subject vocabulary. Leaders should ensure that teachers' plans show precisely what staff want children to know, do and remember, and that the early years curriculum provides the foundation for all subject areas in the key stage 1 curriculum.
- Leaders have begun to devise a system to assess pupils' abilities in the foundation subjects. However, this work is not yet complete. Leaders are unclear on what information they want to gather or how they will use the information collected. Leaders should ensure that an appropriate assessment system is created which meets the school's needs, for example to inform curriculum planning or identify gaps in pupils' learning and provide any individual support needed.
- Some pupils in key stage 1 struggle with reading and lack the confidence and ability to use their phonic knowledge to decode and blend unfamiliar words. These pupils are not supported effectively to help master the skills needed to catch up quickly with their peers. Leaders should ensure that these pupils receive effective support in order to catch up with their peers.

## How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

## **Further information**

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	103214
<b>Local authority</b>	Birmingham
<b>Inspection number</b>	10199611
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	226
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Ian Horton-Worby
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sam Abraham
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.hawthornprimaryschool.co.uk">www.hawthornprimaryschool.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	28 and 29 January 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The headteacher was appointed in September 2019. There is currently an acting deputy headteacher in post.
- There is a hearing-impaired resource base on site which caters for 10 pupils.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher, senior leaders, the attendance and pastoral leader and subject leaders. Meetings were also held with eight members of the governing body and a school improvement officer commissioned by the local authority.

- The inspectors carried out deep dives in reading, English, mathematics, geography and music. Inspection activities in these subjects included: lesson visits, discussion with staff and pupils; meeting with subject leaders, and work scrutiny. The lead inspector also observed pupils reading.
- The inspectors considered a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and plans for improvement. Minutes of governor meetings and reports from the school improvement partner were also scrutinised. Inspectors also looked at records of behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school, and talked to them informally about behaviour, bullying and welfare.
- The inspectors talked to parents at the start of the school day and considered the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, and their free-text responses. They also reviewed the responses to the staff questionnaire and gathered the views of staff and pupils on site through discussion with these groups.

### **Inspection team**

Heather Simpson, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Sarah Jane Cuncannon-Edwards

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

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