

# Howitt Primary Community School

Holmes Street, Heanor, Derbyshire DE75 7FS

## Inspection dates

20–21 September 2016

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

- Despite some important improvements since the previous full inspection, leaders and governors have not been wholly successful in securing good outcomes for all groups of pupils.
- Disadvantaged pupils do not make as good progress as other pupils nationally, particularly in reading.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils, particularly most-able pupils, can achieve across the full range of subjects are not consistently high enough. This means that in subjects such as science, history and geography they do not make good progress.
- Most-able disadvantaged pupils do not read often or widely enough.
- Marking of pupils' work does not consistently follow the school's policy and so does not contribute well to improving their performance.
- When checking the quality of teaching and learning, subject leaders do not provide feedback to teachers that evaluates how successfully pupils are learning and gives clear points for improvement.
- Leaders have not identified precisely why disadvantaged pupils are not doing as well as others. This lessens the positive impact of the pupil premium.

### The school has the following strengths

- Children in the early years make good progress and are well prepared for Year 1.
- Pupils who are not disadvantaged generally make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. In 2016, Year 6 assessments, attainment and progress for all pupils were above the national averages.
- Pupils have positive relationships with their teachers and they behave well.
- Pupils' personal development is good and the school promotes safeguarding effectively.
- The resilience of the headteacher, working closely with governors, has been crucial in securing the improvements made since the previous inspection.

## Full report

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

- Improve the outcomes of disadvantaged pupils by:
  - clearly identifying the barriers that cause them to make slower progress than others
  - ensuring that the pupil premium is used effectively to enable them to overcome these barriers
  - improving school improvement planning so that it includes specific actions and challenging targets to accelerate the progress of disadvantaged pupils
  - ensuring that the most able disadvantaged pupils read regularly and experience a variety of fiction and non-fiction books.
- Improve the quality of teaching across the curriculum so that in all subjects the achievement of pupils is at least good by:
  - providing support and training to increase the confidence of teachers in any subjects where they lack expertise
  - ensuring that teachers have high expectations of what pupils, particularly most-able pupils, should achieve in all of the different subject areas
  - ensuring that feedback and marking in all subjects are consistently in line with the school's policy and help pupils improve their skills and knowledge.
- Improve the positive impact that subject leaders have on the quality of teaching and learning by ensuring that they check rigorously the quality of teaching and learning and provide feedback to staff and governors that reflects accurately strengths and how pupils' achievement can be improved.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because, despite improvements in some important areas since the previous full inspection, disadvantaged pupils are underachieving.
- The headteacher and two deputy headteachers have all been appointed to their posts this year. They are keen and enthusiastic. They recognise the areas where provision and outcomes are not yet good enough. Staff and parents reported positively on the school's ethos and leadership.
- The senior leadership team is reshaping improvement strategies and introducing new approaches to teaching and learning. However, some of the changes they have put in place to drive further improvement are still at an early stage of implementation. They have yet to secure consistently better outcomes for all groups of pupils.
- The pupil premium has been used effectively to improve outcomes for disadvantaged children in the early years. Additional support to help develop their communication and physical skills has led to a considerably greater proportion of them being well equipped to succeed in Year 1. However, in most other parts of the school, disadvantaged pupils are not doing as well as others. Leaders have not identified precisely the factors contributing to this underachievement. Consequently, in key stages 1 and 2, the pupil premium is not accelerating quickly enough the progress of disadvantaged pupils.
- School improvement planning identifies accurately the need to raise the performance of disadvantaged pupils. It highlights the year groups and subjects where their underperformance is greatest. However, the targets set for improving these outcomes are not precise. This makes it difficult for governors to hold leaders to account for the performance of this group.
- Leaders make regular checks on the quality of teaching. However, their records of these activities, including reports to governors, often do not identify how successfully pupils are learning or provide guidance on how teaching could be improved to lead to better achievement.
- Marking is not always effective in helping pupils improve their work along the lines outlined in the school's marking policy. When teachers do make helpful comments that require a response, these are not acted upon consistently by pupils.
- The school's strong focus, since the earlier inspection, on improving outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics has not been matched with a corresponding concern over the quality of the curriculum in other subjects. Subject leaders do check that the statutory curriculum is covered. However, they have not ensured that the provision in subjects such as science, history, geography, French or Spanish is interesting and offers sufficient challenge for the most able pupils.
- The curriculum has been more successful in promoting good behaviour and there is a strong emphasis on pupils knowing what is right and wrong and behaving cooperatively. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. It is particularly noticeable how well the curriculum promotes tolerance and respect for the range of religions, values and beliefs that exist in modern Britain. Pupils spoke impressively of their interest in spirituality and faith.

- British values are well developed within the school curriculum. For example, the history topic 'What Makes Britain Great' highlights the importance of democracy and the rights and responsibilities this brings to being a British citizen.
- Effective systems to manage the performance of the headteacher and staff are in place. Staff value the professional development that they have received and judge that this encourages, challenges and supports their performance. However, in some subjects, for example modern foreign language teaching, teachers lack subject knowledge and confidence.
- Leaders monitor the use of the physical education and sport premium carefully. They ensure that the funding is improving the quality of provision in this area. Extra-curricular clubs are well attended and pupils enjoy the increased opportunities to take part in competitions between local schools.
- Since being judged to require improvement, the school has received enhanced support from the local authority. Leaders value the training and quality assurance of their work provided by its officers. However, despite the close contact since the previous inspection, the local authority has not advised the school to provide more detail about its use of the pupil premium funding and the precise impact its spending decisions have on the outcomes of disadvantaged pupils.

### **Governance of the school**

- Governors, working with the local authority, played a key role in sensitively leading the whole school community through the challenging times that followed the death of the previous headteacher.
- Since the previous inspection, there has been an external review of governance. Recent appointments have increased the level of expertise, and governors have benefited from training which enables them to support and challenge school leaders more effectively.
- Governors receive an appropriate range of information from senior leaders. They are increasingly confident in asking relevant questions about the school's performance and do not simply take reports at face value. However, at the start of the inspection, the information published on the school's website regarding the pupil premium did not meet statutory requirements.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Staff and governors are well aware of the potential threats to pupils' welfare and have a good knowledge of the particular local issues that can put children at risk. The designated safeguarding leaders work closely with all staff to ensure that they are alert to any signs that may suggest possible neglect or abuse. The school has successfully fostered a culture that ensures pupils are comfortable seeking support from a range of staff. All staff have been trained on safeguarding and child protection. They keep a watchful eye over pupils and report promptly any concerns that arise. The designated safeguarding leaders work effectively with families and other agencies to ensure the well-being of children whose circumstances may make them particularly vulnerable.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

## Requires improvement

- Teaching is not consistently effective in key stages 1 and 2. It does not ensure that disadvantaged pupils make good progress or that all pupils achieve as well as they should in subjects other than reading, writing and mathematics.
- Literacy and number skills are not well promoted across the curriculum. For example, the quality of written work in history, geography and science is not of the same standard as it is in literacy books. This is because expectations regarding spelling, punctuation and grammar are too low and so basic errors are often left unchallenged.
- There are very few examples of teaching promoting numeracy effectively in subjects other than mathematics. When charts and graphs are used to present information, they are often untidy and inaccurate. Occasionally, mathematics skills are applied across the curriculum, but typically the same tasks are set for pupils of all abilities. This means that the most able pupils find the tasks too easy.
- Teaching is not encouraging the most able disadvantaged readers to develop a love of books. Once these pupils become fluent readers, they are left to choose their own books. Their reading diaries show that they are rarely heard read in school or at home. The pupils make slow progress through their books. Conversations with these pupils confirm that they receive little encouragement to experience a wide range of fiction and non-fiction texts.
- Teaching helps pupils gain a basic knowledge of, for example, historical and geographical facts. However, often all pupils complete the same tasks and this means that the level of challenge for many is insufficient. Expectations regarding the learning of subject-specific skills and knowledge are not high enough. Teachers' feedback in these books rarely helps pupils improve their understanding of the subject being taught.
- In the majority of mathematics and English lessons observed, staff used questions effectively to check pupils' understanding. When pupils struggled to respond, teachers skilfully identified the cause of the confusion and then gave clear explanations that got the pupils back on track. Alternatively, if pupils answered confidently, teachers would regularly ask an additional question to challenge their thinking further.
- Both teachers and teaching assistants demonstrated good subject knowledge in mathematics lessons. This enables them to give clear explanations of concepts such as place value and ordering. In lessons, pupils participated with enthusiasm and worked with concentration and pace; keen to finish within the time limit set by the teacher. Work in mathematics books shows that most-able pupils often receive suitably challenging work.
- The teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they represent) has improved. As a result, the proportion of pupils that achieve the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics check has increased significantly since the previous full inspection.
- Teachers work closely with their teaching assistants. This ensures that the teaching assistants are clear about the next steps in learning of the pupils they are supporting. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to the learning, particularly of those who need to catch up with their peers.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are positive and learning is only rarely disrupted by pupils losing concentration.

**Personal development and welfare**

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils develop good levels of confidence and self-esteem. They have positive attitudes towards learning and are keen to do well. They spoke very positively of an Aspiration Day where they learned about a range of exciting careers and professions. Pupils know that, to achieve their ambitions, hard work and determination are essential.
- Pupils are confident that they are kept safe. If they have worries, there are always adults who will listen to them and care for them. They value the Tiger Room as a place where they can go and find support if they are feeling worried.
- Pupils know about healthy choices regarding diet and exercise. They are aware of the dangers to health posed by smoking and the misuse of drugs and substances. There is a good range of after-school clubs for pupils to enjoy. These successfully promote their physical well-being.
- Pupils take on responsibilities such as school councillors, library monitors and peer mentors enthusiastically. They enjoy contributing to school life.
- Pupils love the wide range of educational visits that support their learning. These visits, together with a thoughtfully planned programme of assemblies, successfully promote good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils are kind and caring. Their attitudes to adults and each another show that the school is successfully meeting its aim that pupils will demonstrate 'care and consideration for others respecting truth and fairness'.
- Pupils understand that bullying can take many forms. They said that there is occasionally some bullying, but that when it occurs it is dealt with promptly. There is a strong focus in assemblies and lessons on online safety. This ensures that pupils are very clear about how to avoid danger when using the internet.
- Pupils spoke thoughtfully about rare instances of racist and homophobic bullying in the past. They said that the school had dealt with these promptly and effectively. School records confirm this and the school's commitment to promoting equality is demonstrated by its involvement in a pilot programme of Teaching Diversity led by the University of Derby.
- The before- and after-school clubs are popular and provide a secure environment for pupils to start and end their school day.

**Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The large majority of parents and staff agree that the behaviour of pupils is good.
- The school is calm and orderly. Pupils understand the school rules and appreciate their value. There is a comprehensive range of rewards to recognise good behaviour. Poor behaviour attracts a number of different sanctions, including a loss of privileges. Any pupils whose conduct raises concerns receive effective additional support to help them manage their behaviour more successfully.
- The very small number of pupils who have particularly challenging behaviour benefit from the school's good links with the local authority behaviour support service and other outside agencies.

- In lessons, the great majority of pupils work with sustained concentration and try hard with their work. Disruptions to learning are rare.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school. Attendance is at the national average and very few pupils are persistently absent. The school promotes good attendance through rewards and celebrations. Staff follow up diligently any lateness or absenteeism.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Requires improvement

- Disadvantaged pupils do not make good progress from their starting points. The school's own information about pupils' progress in the last school year shows that, from Year 2 onwards, with the exception of the current Year 5, disadvantaged pupils made considerably slower progress than others.
- In 2015 national assessments at the end of key stage 1, disadvantaged pupils attained much lower than other pupils nationally. In 2016, disadvantaged pupils performed better in reading and mathematics, but their writing skills were well below those of other pupils. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils achieving the expected standard in phonics at the end of Year 2 increased in 2016.
- In 2015 and 2016 national assessments at the end of key stage 2, disadvantaged pupils made much slower progress in reading than other pupils nationally. Most-able disadvantaged pupils are not keen readers. Those who met with inspectors choose to read a narrow range of books and do not change them regularly.
- Progress for all pupils in subjects other than reading, writing and mathematics is not good enough. This is because teaching in these subjects does not reflect high enough expectations or offer sufficient challenge. Pupils' work in these subjects is not planned well to take into account the range of abilities, and recorded work is not closely assessed. Discussions with pupils indicate that they are not gaining good subject-specific knowledge or skills.
- The progress of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is slower than that of pupils with similar starting points. The school provides effectively for their physical and emotional needs and this is appreciated by parents who spoke to inspectors. However, systems to ensure that the identified needs of pupils who require additional support are met in their daily lessons are not robust enough to ensure that they make good progress.
- Despite these important weaknesses, there have been some impressive gains in pupils' outcomes by the end of key stage 2 since the previous inspection. At that time, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level in reading, writing and mathematics was below the national average. In 2016 national assessments, the proportion of pupils reaching the new expected standard in these subjects was considerably above the national average. These outcomes show that most pupils do leave Howitt with the skills necessary to succeed at their secondary schools.
- The improved attainment at the end of Year 6 is a result of better progress in key stage 2. In reading, writing and mathematics, the progress of all pupils was better than the national average. These gains, driven by the achievement of pupils who are not disadvantaged, including the most able and pupils who needed to catch up, demonstrate that there have been improvements in the quality of teaching and learning since the previous inspection.

- Scores in phonics screening checks in Year 1 have also improved at a faster rate than they have nationally. In 2016, the percentage of disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard rose by 30% to 75%. This impressive improvement is a consequence of very effective phonics teaching both in the early years and in Year 1.
- Pupils' outcomes in sporting activities are good. The school uses the physical education and sport premium effectively. Good numbers of pupils participate in physical activities including dodge ball, dance, tag rugby and basketball.

## Early years provision

**Good**

- Leadership of early years is effective and has successfully raised the quality of teaching and learning since the previous inspection. The leader ensures that the Nursery and Reception classes work closely together and share the same approaches to assessment, planning and teaching. Phonics teaching in all early years classes takes place at the same time. This allows for great flexibility when placing children in the phonics group that best meets their needs.
- The leader holds the early years team to account for the children's progress. To help meet their targets, staff analyse and use assessment information effectively when planning activities and deciding the next steps of learning for individual children.
- The proportion of children reaching a good level of development at the end of the Reception Year was above the national average in 2015. In 2016, this proportion rose, and 75% of children achieved a good level of development. These outcomes show good progress as the children enter Nursery with skills below those that are typical for their age. Children are well prepared for Year 1.
- Disadvantaged pupils are now making the same progress as other children and a similar proportion are achieving a good level of development. This reflects the very effective use of pupil premium spending based on an insightful knowledge of each child's needs. Once the children start Nursery, staff meet with parents and make careful assessments to gain a precise understanding of each child's stage of development. This means that, right from the start, teaching matches well the needs of each individual child.
- The use of pupil premium funding to provide additional support for disadvantaged pupils with speech or physical development below that typical for their age has been particularly effective. Good links with the speech and language therapist help secure expert additional support for children whose speech development raises more serious concerns.
- Adults take care to promote learning through themes that capture the children's imagination. At the time of the inspection, children were learning about firefighters through reading books together, drawing, painting, model-making and writing. Children working with an adult, identifying longest and shortest ladders, made good progress. However, a group of children outside were less positively occupied when not supported by an adult. For example, a group using 'water hoses' to aim water at numbers on a board were unsure of the purpose of the game they were playing.
- The great majority of the small number of parents with children in early years who spoke to inspectors or completed the online questionnaire are very positive about the quality of education and care their children receive. In conversations with inspectors, they praised how well the school builds the children's confidence and how smooth the

transition is from Nursery to Reception.

- Consistently high expectations for behaviour are insisted on and these have a positive impact upon learning. Only on rare occasions do a small handful of children lose concentration. Behaviour and safety are good. Children get along well with their classmates. They have a good understanding of how their actions can impact on their friends.
- Teachers and teaching assistants know how young children learn best. The early years classes are well resourced, with bright and attractive activities both inside and outside the classrooms. Children move safely between the areas of learning. For example, they line up impeccably at the beginning and end of their phonics sessions. Adults are well trained in procedures to ensure that children are safe in the school.

## School details

Unique reference number	135172
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	10019561

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	414
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Robert Harper
Headteacher	Lynn Pilling
Telephone number	01773 713217
Website	<a href="http://www.howittprimary.org.uk">www.howittprimary.org.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:headteacher@howitt.derbyshire.sch.uk">headteacher@howitt.derbyshire.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	3–4 December 2014

## Information about this school

- Howitt Primary Community School is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged and supported by the pupil premium funding is well above average. This is additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children looked after by the local authority
- The school runs both before- and after-school clubs.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The headteacher took up her post in January 2016. She had previously been the school's deputy headteacher. Her appointment followed the sudden death of her predecessor.
- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information on its website about the use and impact of the pupil premium funding.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited all classes to observe teaching. Some of these visits took place with school leaders.
- Inspectors asked pupils about their learning and what it is like to be a pupil at the school.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils' workbooks and heard pupils from Years 1, 2, 4 and 6 read.
- Inspectors took account of 28 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire (Parent View) and had brief discussions with parents at the beginning of the school day.
- Thirty-eight responses to the staff questionnaire were received and analysed as were 91 pupil responses to their questionnaire.
- Discussions took place with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, teachers, members of the governing body and representatives of the local authority.
- Documents were analysed, including the school's self-evaluation statement, school development plan, minutes of governing body meetings and information about pupils' achievement.
- Records relating to attendance and safeguarding were scrutinised.

## Inspection team

Tony O'Malley, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Christine Lethbridge	Ofsted Inspector
Harkireet Sohel	Ofsted Inspector

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