

Mexborough Highwoods Primary School

Highwoods Road, Mexborough, South Yorkshire, S64 9ES

Inspection dates 25–26 September 2012

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| Overall effectiveness | Previous inspection: | Satisfactory | 3 |
| | This inspection: | Good | 2 |
| Achievement of pupils | | Good | 2 |
| Quality of teaching | | Good | 2 |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils | | Good | 2 |
| Leadership and management | | Good | 2 |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The overwhelming majority of pupils make good progress in literacy and numeracy and across a wide range of subjects.
- Standards in reading, writing and mathematics have improved significantly over a sustained period.
- Teaching and learning are mostly good throughout the school and much teaching is outstanding. Teachers plan lessons very well using their good knowledge of what pupils have understood and the areas where they need more practise.
- Pupils' skills in using new technology contribute strongly to their good progress and enjoyment of lessons.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around school. They say they feel safe and bullying almost never happens. Excellent relationships in lessons create a climate which promotes pupils' learning well.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher work as an effective team with high expectations of both pupils and teachers. They ensure that teaching and pupils' work are rigorously monitored. Teachers are given good guidance as to how their teaching can be improved. As a result, both the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement are improving strongly.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- In a few lessons, the teaching, including marking, is not always strong enough to accelerate pupils' learning fast enough, particularly for the most-able pupils.
- There are a number of older pupils who have gaps in their understanding of some basic skills because of some disturbances to their learning in the past.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 11 lessons taught by eight teachers. Inspectors also made a number of short visits to classrooms and listened to pupils read.
- Meetings were held with a group of pupils, members of the governing body, a representative from the local authority and members of staff including senior and middle leaders.
- Inspectors took account of six responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and outcomes from the school's consultations with parents and pupils.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents including data on pupils' current progress, school development plans, performance management documentation and records relating to pupils' behaviour and safety.

Inspection team

John Dunne, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Lynne Davies

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Mexborough Highwoods is smaller than the average sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is around twice the national average.
- The large majority of pupils are from White British families.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- During the period 2010 to 2011, a significant number of classes were taught by temporary or supply teachers.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the proportion of good and outstanding teaching by:
 - ensuring that all marking identifies what pupils have successfully achieved, identifies misconceptions, the steps needed to remedy them and pupils are given opportunities to correct mistakes
 - ensuring work in all lessons is suitably adapted to provide greater challenge for the most-able pupils
 - eliminating the small number of lessons where pupils spend too long having to listen to teachers, so that pupils have greater opportunities to reinforce their learning, work independently and in groups.
- Improve the achievement of pupils in upper Key Stage 2 who have experienced a lack of continuity in their learning in English and mathematics by:
 - rapidly identifying any historical gaps in their basic skills and taking action to fill these gaps. Notable areas to improve are multiplication tables, clarity of understanding of arithmetic operations and aspects of sentence construction and grammar.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils enter Reception with skills which are below, and in some cases well-below, those expected for their age. The secure and friendly environment helps children settle in very quickly. Good teaching ensures that children make good progress to reach close to expected levels by the time they join Year 1.
- Pupils continue to progress well through Key Stage 1 where standards have risen faster than the national picture over a sustained period and are now close to the national average.
- The strongly improving trend in standards in reading, writing and mathematics in Key Stage 2 stalled in 2011 due to considerable turbulence in staffing. This is no longer the case and, as a result, standards in English and mathematics are rising and are now broadly average as shown by 2012 test results and work observed during the inspection.
- From pupils' low starting points this represents good progress, with an increasing proportion of pupils making better than expected progress.
- Some pupils in Key Stage 2 have gaps in their basic skills as a result of the earlier disturbances in their learning. This, combined with some lack of challenge in teaching, is slowing their progress, especially for the most-able pupils.
- As a result of the systematic teaching of letters and sounds, alongside a keen fostering of enjoyment of books, pupils reach average standards in reading by the end of Key Stages 1 and 2.
- In the past, the attainment and progress of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium have lagged behind others. This gap has now closed and they make good progress.
- Pupils' skill in using new technologies is a strength. Pupils were seen creating outstanding computer presentations. Similarly, the standard of music is high.
- Pupils demonstrate good speaking and listening skills to express their ideas clearly. This is promoted by sharply focused questioning during lessons from teachers and other adults in the classroom. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make at least expected progress due to well-planned teaching and intervention programmes aimed at boosting their basic skills where adult support is well deployed to help them. Their progress within these programmes is carefully monitored to ensure they are having a positive impact on progress.
- The excellent relationships between staff and pupils in lessons provide a secure climate for learning and underpin pupils' good learning and progress.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching over time, as shown by pupils' good achievement, the school's rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning and lessons observed during the inspection, is good overall and much is outstanding. No inadequate teaching was observed. This represents a considerably stronger teaching profile than seen at the last inspection.
- In one outstanding science lesson, pupils made rapid gains in their understanding of forces, gravity and space travel due to:
 - the infectious enthusiasm of the teacher, coupled with his exceptionally strong subject knowledge
 - an innovative and exciting set of tasks which enthralled pupils and so their engagement was exemplary
 - the brisk pace of the lesson and the way it built strongly upon pupils' prior learning
 - sharply focused questioning which made pupils think deeply about the problems with which they were engaged
 - skilfully adapted work so that pupils of all abilities were being fully challenged
 - the teacher's high expectations and frequent checks on the progress of individuals and

groups.

- In the best lessons, planning is meticulous and well adapted to take account of teachers' assessments of what pupils have securely learnt and where there are misconceptions or gaps in learning.
- Teachers have very good subject knowledge and also understand the needs of the age group they teach. This is evident in the Early Years Foundation Stage with a focus on enjoyment and learning through practical activity.
- Most work is effectively marked and some marking is exemplary, clearly indicating where pupils have demonstrated successful learning and what they have to do to improve. This is not a totally consistent picture and a small amount of marking is extremely superficial, leaving pupils unaware of misconceptions and failing to give them opportunities to remedy them.
- In a small minority of lessons, teachers spend too long explaining or modelling activities, leaving little time for pupils to demonstrate or practise their new learning. In these lessons, learning is not promoted well.
- Occasionally, activities fail to include sufficient challenge and opportunities for the most-able pupils to practise the higher order skills which will enable them to reach the higher levels of attainment.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Most learning experiences are interesting and all teachers and teaching assistants have high expectations of behaviour and good classroom management skills. Consequently, inappropriate behaviour in lessons almost never interferes with learning.
- Pupils, and all of the parents who responded to Parent View, also expressed the view that the school provides a very safe environment.
- Pupils are well informed about different types of bullying that they may encounter. They say that bullying almost never occurs. They have a good understanding of how to stay safe, including how to keep safe when using new technologies.
- Attendance is above average and improving because pupils enjoy coming to school and the school provides a very secure and safe environment.
- Pupils with emotional and behavioural needs are extremely well managed and supported sensitively. The way in which pupils from many social backgrounds interact harmoniously is a strength of the school and provides a secure climate for learning.
- Pupils show great consideration and respect for others and greet visitors in a very polite and friendly manner, reflecting the way they are treated with care and respect by staff.
- The school's personal and social skills programme teaches pupils how to deal with relationships and emotional issues and is effective in removing barriers to learning.

The leadership and management are good

- The way all members of staff work as a cohesive team is a strong feature of the school. The headteacher and deputy headteacher work extremely effectively together and are well supported by middle leaders, the Early Years Foundation Stage coordinator and the inclusion manager and mentor.
- They share a determination to drive up standards and have an accurate understanding of where improvements are required. Despite considerable turmoil to staffing, the strong leadership has ensured significant progress has been made in remedying all of the areas for

improvement identified at the last inspection.

- The school now has a stable team of mostly good and some outstanding teachers and all evidence shows that the improving picture of good achievement has been restored. This clearly demonstrates the capacity for further improvement.
 - There are rigorous systems for monitoring teaching and learning and the performance management of staff. All teachers and teaching assistants have clearly understood targets for improvement supported by relevant plans for their professional development. Teaching is much better with only minor aspects remaining to be tackled.
 - Systems for tracking the progress of subjects, individuals and specific groups, identifying reasons for underachievement and putting in place intervention plans to bring about improvement are embedded. As a result, previous gaps between the progress of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium and others have been eliminated. These systems are starting to identify those pupils in Key Stage 2 who have some historical gaps in their skills and knowledge and continue to require support.
 - The school's evaluation of its strengths and areas for development is accurate. The school development plan has highlighted all of the areas for improvement identified by inspectors and has prioritised appropriate strategies to improve outcomes.
 - The effectiveness of the school's systems for promoting equality and tackling discrimination is evident in the excellent relationships and the way all groups achieve well.
 - The curriculum provides good opportunities for promoting pupils' basic skills across a range of subjects. It also includes a wide range of learning activities to effectively promote pupils' spiritual and cultural development including:
 - international links with schools
 - visits to places of worship which include a range of faiths
 - strong provision within the arts, particularly music and dance.
 - All statutory responsibilities for safeguarding are met.
 - The local authority provides effective support for the school.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is supportive and fulfils a variety of tasks in school.
 - They aspire to provide a high challenge to the school although several governors are new to their roles.
 - Governors are implementing a sharply focused plan to develop the effectiveness of the governing body.
 - They are carefully involved in planning the use of pupil premium funding to boost learning.
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What inspection judgements mean

| School | | |
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| Grade | Judgement | Description |
| Grade 1 | Outstanding | An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment. |
| Grade 2 | Good | A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment. |
| Grade 3 | Requires improvement | A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection. |
| Grade 4 | Inadequate | <p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> |

School details

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| Unique reference number | 106748 |
| Local authority | Doncaster |
| Inspection number | 405053 |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Maintained |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 176 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Peter Gleadhall |
| Headteacher | Diane Dunn |
| Date of previous school inspection | 25 January 2011 |
| Telephone number | 01709 583273 |
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