

Howard Park Community School

St Peg Lane, Cleckheaton, West Yorkshire BD19 3SD

Inspection dates

12–13 September 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	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Improvements since the last inspection mean that teaching, learning and assessment have improved and, as a consequence, pupils are making accelerated progress.
- Governors responded well to the governance review and have a clear understanding of their role. They are providing effective challenge and support to school leaders.
- Senior leaders, supported by governors, have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They have systematically tackled shortcomings.
- Leaders have responded positively to support from the local authority and have begun to work well with a local primary school.
- Leaders ensure that safeguarding has the highest priority so that pupils are safe at all times.
- Leadership has improved, but some leaders are new to their roles and their skills at judging and influencing others are underdeveloped.
- Strengths in the early years, behaviour and pupils' personal development have been maintained and so continue to be good.
- Pupils are well behaved and have good attitudes to learning and usually try hard to complete their work.
- Children get off to a good start in early years. They settle quickly into routines and build strong relationships with staff.
- The broad and balanced curriculum offers opportunities for pupils to work independently and show initiative and imagination. It provides well for pupils' personal development through assemblies and personal, social and health education lessons. There is a good range of clubs.
- The outdoor environment is well looked after and pupils talk enthusiastically about the grounds and the opportunities they have for outdoor learning and play.
- Progress has improved and almost all make good progress. However, progress in writing is a little uneven and some of the most able pupils do not do as well as they could.
- Teaching has improved, but some of the school's policies for teaching reading, handwriting and spelling are not applied consistently. Sometimes, teaching does not challenge the most able.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve further pupils' attainment and progress in writing by:
 - providing work that is more finely tuned to different pupils' abilities, particularly the most able
 - making teachers' expectations of the quality and quantity of work more explicit
 - making success criteria more closely linked to the needs of pupils of different abilities, particularly the most able and least able.
- Further improve the quality of teaching and learning by ensuring that teachers more consistently:
 - apply the school's policies for teaching reading, spelling and handwriting
 - work together and with teachers from other schools to agree standards in writing to ensure that assessments are accurate.
- Further improve leadership and management by developing leaders' skills at judging and influencing the work of the school.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher has led the staff to bring about a raft of improvements since the last inspection. Attainment is improving because of more effective teaching. Pupils and parents recognise that the school has improved over the last two years.
- Senior leaders have an accurate view of the strengths and relative weaknesses at the school. Well-targeted development has resulted in improved teaching and learning, which has led to a trend of improving attainment.
- Senior leaders and governors have a secure grasp of what still needs to be done to improve the school further.
- The performance of staff is monitored effectively by school leaders. Underperformance is challenged. Staff training has helped teachers to improve the effectiveness of their teaching. Leaders use lesson observations, discussions with pupils and the scrutiny of work to check on the impact of planned developments and to provide targeted advice and guidance.
- The leadership of teaching and learning is effective. Senior leaders observe lessons and accurately identify strengths and pinpoint where improvements can be made. Work to improve the teaching of writing has been effective. This has included the introduction of a more systematic whole-school approach and agreed criteria for assessing writing.
- The curriculum is well planned so that it is broad and balanced. Pupils enjoy learning about many exciting topics. The curriculum is contributing effectively to pupils' achievement in a wide range of subjects.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is effectively promoted through the curriculum and in whole-school assemblies. Pupils are taught explicitly about British values so they are well prepared for living in modern Britain. For example, they are taught about democracy using elections for school councillors and they learn about major world religions.
- Curriculum provision is enhanced by a range of activities beyond the classroom. For example, pupils have visited places of worship and museums.
- Pupil premium funding is used effectively. It is improving disadvantaged pupils' attainment and progress. Additional funding for physical education and sport is similarly used effectively. As a consequence, pupils enthusiastically take part in a wide range of sports.
- Leaders use funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities well. The additional support, both for academic and personal development, is having a positive impact on pupils' progress and social skills.
- The school has benefited well from support provided by a more effective local primary school. Senior leaders are aware that there is scope to build on this and have identified the need to make the assessments of pupils' work more reliable. While assessments are largely sound, there is some variability within the school in the accuracy of assessments, particularly in writing. As a consequence, teachers do not always identify pupils who are capable of the highest standards in writing.

- The quality of leadership has improved and leaders are clear about their roles and responsibilities. Subject leaders have ensured that curriculum plans are sound and contribute to pupils' positive experiences in a range of subjects. However, some subject leaders are new to their roles and some of their skills are underdeveloped at judging and influencing the work of other teachers across the school.

Governance of the school

- Governors responded well to the review of governance. They have a good understanding of their strategic role in setting the direction of the school. They regularly and robustly question leaders about the quality of education and pupils' achievement.
- Training means that governors have a good understanding of the school's data and understand where improvement is being secured and where further work is needed. Governors have a very clear understanding of what they must do next to build upon the many improvements made since the previous inspection.
- Governors regularly make visits to the school to see first hand the impact of planned improvements.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Staff are very caring, and a secure culture of safeguarding exists in the school. Stringent checks are carried out before staff or visitors can work in the school. Accurate records of these checks are kept. The school site is well maintained and safe.
- Staff receive appropriate training and regular updates about potential risks to pupils. Staff know which procedures to follow if they have any concerns about any pupil's well-being.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers have positive relationships with pupils and, as a consequence, pupils listen carefully to their teachers and usually try hard to complete tasks. Teachers use time well and the pace of learning is usually brisk.
- Teachers, particularly in key stage 2, use opportunities to remind pupils about punctuation and grammar rules. This has helped to ensure that pupils make good progress in these aspects.
- Teachers use their good subject knowledge to explain new ideas clearly. They model the correct pronunciation and spelling of new vocabulary. For example, in one lesson, the teacher explained the meaning of a range of vocabulary connected to evacuees during the war.
- Teaching in mathematics is effective. Explanations are clear and teachers use questioning well to check on understanding and to encourage pupils to think more carefully about their work.

- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are effectively supported within lessons. Adults know these pupils' needs well and set tasks that support their academic and social needs. Teaching assistants are used well and their work with individuals and small groups makes a positive contribution to pupils' learning and progress.
- Although teaching is resulting in good progress for most pupils and tasks are well thought out, sometimes tasks do not challenge the most able pupils. Sometimes, the most able pupils have to listen to all of the instructions and explanations, even when they are ready to begin their work. As a consequence, they do not always reach the highest standards. Teachers' expectations of the most able pupils are not always as high as they could be in terms of the quality and quantity of work required within a lesson.
- A particular improvement has been a review of the school's approach to teaching handwriting. As a consequence, handwriting is improving and many of the oldest pupils are developing a legible style of handwriting and are proud of their handwriting and presentation. However, there are some inconsistencies in the application of the new approach and sometimes inaccurate letter formation is not corrected.
- The school's new approach to the teaching of writing is having a positive impact and rates of progress are improving. Writing tasks are carefully selected to interest both boys and girls. A relatively new policy is to share success criteria with pupils for each piece of writing they are expected to do. While this is helping some of the older pupils to improve their work, sometimes these are too lengthy and too complicated to help the lower ability writers. Sometimes these are not precise enough to help the most able to reach the highest standards. As a consequence, some pupils do not benefit fully from this school policy.
- The teaching of reading is effective and, as a consequence, pupils make good progress. Pupils who read to inspectors used phonic skills to tackle unknown words and said that they enjoy reading. Older pupils are encouraged to read widely and are able to talk about the value of fiction and non-fiction books. However, there is some confusion about the translation of the school's policy on its approach to teaching reading. For example, some pupils say that they have not been taking reading books home for some time and some of the youngest pupils have not been introduced to home-reading books.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils develop confidence and understand the need to do their best if they want to benefit from their time at school.
- Pupils who met with inspectors talked with confidence about all that staff do to encourage pupils to get on with one another and to understand people who are different. For example, they talked about the need to respect differences, including different beliefs, so that everyone can get on better.

- Pupils talked about the importance of rules in school and laws beyond school to keep everyone safe. Elections for school councillors are used effectively to teach pupils about democracy.
- Pupils gain a good understanding of healthy lifestyles through their physical education and science lessons, and the wide range of clubs which encourage their development.
- Older pupils talk with confidence about how to stay safe online. They are fully aware of the potential dangers of sharing personal information and images online.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils' behaviour around the school and in lessons is good. Pupils understand that the rules are there to keep them safe. They respect each other and adults. Pupils told inspectors that the behaviour observed during the inspection was typical and that pupils get on well together.
- Pupils are clear about different types of bullying, including racism, and say that instances of bullying are rare. They are confident that when there are concerns about bullying, these are dealt with by staff.
- Pupils are polite and courteous, and welcome visitors. They readily hold doors open for visitors and greet them with a cheery 'Good morning' or 'Good afternoon'. Pupils conduct themselves well during break- and lunchtimes. As a consequence, the school is calm and orderly and pupils say that they feel safe.
- Attitudes to learning are good and most books are presented well and pupils take pride in their work. There are few instances of disruption to learning and pupils enthusiastically engage in activities and work cooperatively with each other.
- Pupils' attendance is average and they are punctual to school. Leaders know individual pupils and their families well and work closely with them to address any attendance issues when they arise. The impact of this work is that the attendance of individual pupils, particularly those who are disadvantaged or who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, has improved.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils' attainment is rising because their progress is accelerating. Pupils are reaching higher standards from their individual starting points in a range of subjects. Almost all groups of pupils are now achieving better outcomes. This is reflected in provisional 2017 end-of-key-stage assessment outcomes, the school's own assessment information and in pupils' books.
- Following a dip in attainment in 2016, this year the proportion of children reaching a good level of development in early years increased. Records showing children's starting points and learning over time show that they made good progress.

- Although there has been a dip in the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check this year, there has been a trend of improvement since the previous inspection. From their starting points, this still represents good progress.
- At the end of Year 2, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard increased this year in reading, writing and mathematics because of improvements in teaching.
- At the end of Year 6, likewise, the proportion of pupils reaching and exceeding the expected standard increased in reading and writing this year. Their scores in reading, and mathematics represent average attainment and in grammar, punctuation and spelling above-average attainment. This reflects recent improvements in teaching and accelerated progress for these pupils over the last two years.
- Pupils' progress in lessons is accelerating. Although there are some slight differences in the attainment of boys and girls from one year to the next, progress from their different starting points is good. Similarly, sometimes there are differences in the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and that of their peers. In some years, disadvantaged pupils have performed better than their peers and sometimes not as well. The school's assessment information shows that these groups make good progress from their starting points.
- Although attainment and progress in writing are improving, the progress from pupils' starting points is uneven and few reach the highest standards. The most able pupils do not always do as well as they could, particularly in writing.
- Pupils who have identified special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because of the effective support they receive.
- Pupils make good progress in a range of subjects. For example, pupils were able to talk about what they had learned in science lessons about the Earth and space. They were able to describe why the moon appears to change during its movement around the Earth. Pupils were able to talk about their improved confidence in swimming and other improved sporting skills.

Early years provision

Good

- The early years leader has an accurate picture of the setting's strengths and areas for development. With a good knowledge of the early years foundation stage curriculum, the leader has ensured that children's needs are quickly identified so that the planned activities meet every child's needs. Teaching is effective and ensures that children make good progress during their time in the Nursery and Reception class.
- Induction arrangements are effective and good relationships with parents are fostered. Staff welcome new starters into Nursery and provide good care to ensure that children settle quickly into routines. Displays are used well. For example, in Reception, the display was on 'My first day at school'; children had enthusiastically prepared a box of items which they had collected, and were confident and self-assured in explaining why they had chosen to bring the items with them on their first day.

- When children start in the Nursery and Reception class, their skills and knowledge are usually below those found in children of their age nationally. Early assessments of the skills of the current new intake would suggest that their skills and knowledge are more in line with those of other children nationally. The school's records show that, from their starting points, children make good gains so that they are well prepared for their move into Year 1.
- Teaching is good. Staff work tirelessly and collaboratively to provide a broad and balanced curriculum which provides lots of interesting activities for children to undertake independently and with adults. Staff model high expectations for all children and in turn, the children can confidently make their own choices and use equipment well. Children are well cared for and welfare and safeguarding are effective.
- Interactions between adults and children are excellent; staff listen carefully to children, ask them open questions to develop their vocabulary and model language for the children. Staff are effective role models for the children in this respect. As a result of skilful questioning, children are encouraged to extend their vocabulary.
- The outdoor learning area is very well equipped and helps children to develop their skills through play. For example, a keen group of children were observed making patterns with squeeze water bottles on the ground. This led to discussions about the patterns they were making and helped to develop their vocabulary.

School details

Unique reference number	107671
Local authority	Kirklees
Inspection number	10036550

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	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	264
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Gordon Muir
Headteacher	Marcus Newby
Telephone number	01274 864972
Website	www.howardpark.co.uk
Email address	office@howardpark.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	7–8 July 2015

Information about this school

- Howard Park Community School is similar in size to the average-sized primary school. Most pupils are White British. The number of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is average. In some year groups, the proportions are well below average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is average. The proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is above average. A small number of pupils are looked after.
- Children in Nursery attend part time. Children in the Reception class attend full time.
- The headteacher took up post shortly after the previous inspection. The school has been supported by a national leader of education, the headteacher of a local school.

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations of attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 15 lessons or part-lessons. These included joint observations with the headteacher and deputy headteacher. There was detailed scrutiny of pupils' writing books from the previous academic year and observations of pupils' current work.
- Inspectors listened to Year 1 and Year 3 pupils read.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils from Years 3, 4, 5 and 6, members of the governing body (including the chair of governors), senior leaders, middle leaders and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors observed the work of the school and examined a number of documents, including those concerned with pupils' current achievement and progress, development plans and information about teachers' performance. They also looked at records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding arrangements. The minutes of meetings of the governing body were also considered.
- Inspectors considered the 13 responses by parents to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and spoke to parents at the beginning and end of the school day.
- Inspectors reviewed the school's website.

Inspection team

Amraz Ali, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Alison Ashworth	Ofsted Inspector
Ella Besharati	Ofsted Inspector

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