

Hazeldene Lower School

Stancliffe Road, Bedford, MK41 9AT

Inspection dates 14–15 January 2016

Overall effectiveness **Good**

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Early years provision is a strength of the school. Children get off to a flying start in the Nursery and Reception classes. High-quality provision ensures that children make excellent progress from their varied starting points.
- The school is a happy place and standards of behaviour are very good. Pupils feel very safe and build strong relationships with staff.
- Senior leaders have worked well as a team to improve some aspects of their work. They have succeeded in providing an inclusive and welcoming learning environment.
- Pupils make at least expected progress in reading and writing and a good number make rapid progress. Progress is also good in mathematics. By the end of Year 4 pupils achieve well in these subjects.
- The school is well led. Senior leaders and governors provide clear direction and demonstrate good capacity to make the school even better.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good. Staff know pupils well. Pupils with special educational needs thrive at the school. The support for the increasing number of pupils who speak English as an additional language is increasingly effective.
- The 'Golden Rules' are well understood by all. Respect, understanding and tolerance are reinforced throughout the day and through a wide range of extra-curricular activities and special events. Pupils enjoy coming to school and their attendance is very good.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The skills of subject leaders in checking how well pupils are doing and in improving the quality of teaching and learning are not fully developed.
- In some classes and subjects expectations of what pupils can achieve are too low.
- The curriculum is not well balanced. There is insufficient time given to the teaching of subjects other than English and mathematics. Some subjects are not studied with enough frequency.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the skills of subject leaders so that they can:
 - ensure that teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and set work that deepens pupils' understanding across all subjects
 - evaluate with more precision the quality of teaching in their subjects and provide clarity to staff about the quantity and quality of work required to improve pupils' learning further.

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning so that more is outstanding by:
 - providing a richer curriculum with sufficient time for teachers to develop pupils' skills and knowledge in subjects other than English and mathematics
 - checking that, during the week, time is used well to reinforce specific knowledge in a range of subjects
 - checking that teaching and learning in all classes are more consistently good or better.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- Leaders, governors and staff are passionate in their commitment to securing the best possible outcomes for each pupil. The headteacher ensures that staff are well supported to reach the high standards she expects. Everyone is committed to making Hazeldene Lower School even better.
- Senior leaders observe teaching and check teachers' planning and pupils' books frequently to sustain and drive improvements. A good example of the impact of effective senior leadership is demonstrated by the relentless focus on improving teaching and learning in mathematics. This has led to better standards in this subject over time.
- Staff welcome the priority given to training and cite examples of effective internal and external training that have had an impact on improving their teaching. The difference these opportunities are making is best evidenced in the early years.
- Systems to manage the performance of teaching staff are closely linked to the school's improvement plans. Staff are set ambitious targets and are working well, individually and as a team, to improve their practice. The headteacher knows where teaching is not as strong as it should be. She does not shy away from difficult conversations when teachers are not meeting the high standards expected by the school.
- Subject leadership has a way to go to contribute more robustly to driving standards. Subject leaders check teachers' planning and their use of resources, and offer advice to staff. Teachers have a good idea of how to assess accurately and teach the content of the curriculum in mathematics and English. However, in most other subjects, leaders do not evaluate pupils' work and the quality of teaching closely enough. Priorities for improvement in each subject are sometimes not specified enough or lack focus on improving outcomes for pupils.
- Over the academic year, a large chunk of time is given to English and mathematics. Pupils experience daily reinforcement of learning in these two subjects, leading to pupils' good results. Some special events, such as SHINE days, expose pupils to varied topics and different ways of learning. However, in some subjects, the limited time, combined with the infrequent coverage, means that opportunities for pupils to deepen their skills and specific knowledge are missed.
- Sports and physical education (PE) funding is used wisely by school leaders. Pupils talk enthusiastically about the range of sporting opportunities they have experienced. These include athletics competitions and multi-sports festivals. Pupils have represented the school in competitions locally. Teachers have benefited from training through the school's membership of the local Sports Partnership and through other training events. There is a wide range of lunchtime and after-school opportunities, including a range of clubs, such as gymnastics, dance and tag rugby.
- Pupil premium funding is used very well. The cohort is too small to report on overall outcomes but individual pupils do well from their starting points and their progress is at least as good as others in the school. Pupils who have special educational needs also achieve well because their specific learning, health and welfare needs are met. Parents are very complimentary about this aspect of their children's education.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The curriculum ensures that pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. There is a culture of tolerance and respect threaded through school. Pupils are aware of the school's values and the fundamental British values are reinforced well through aspects of the curriculum and displays around the school. The month's value, such as the 'Hope Poem for 2016' on the school's website, enables pupils to reflect on what each value actually means for them. Pupils are keen to help others. The school council is proud of its work and the 'Student Voice' books are used well to gather pupils' ideas for further improvement. Pupils have opportunities to be active citizens across the school and to contribute to the life of their local community through fundraising and charitable activities.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are very effective because staff are extremely vigilant. The commitment to supporting others and the staff's understanding of the school's procedures and policies ensure that pupils are safe. Pupils say that they feel safe when they are at school. Senior leaders are approachable and highly visible around the school; parents and pupils know that any concerns they have will be addressed promptly. All staff have had relevant training. The school works well with external agencies to secure effective support for pupils. The headteacher, in particular, goes the extra mile to ensure that families in need of intensive support are helped at times of crisis. The school works well with the local authority's early help team.

■ The governance of the school

- Governors review their own roles and responsibilities regularly and rigorously. Each governor is linked to a particular area of school provision. This, alongside the more formal work of the governing body, provides a strong, effective structure which governors use to hold leaders closely to account.
- Governors understand a wide range of information about pupils' outcomes. They ensure that funding is spent wisely and that teachers' pay progression depends on how effective they are. The subject reports to governors provide a helpful overview of each subject. There is scope to improve these reports further so that they focus more tightly on the difference provision makes to pupils' outcomes in all areas of the curriculum.
- Governors carry out a suitable range of checks to ensure that their statutory duties in relation to safeguarding are met. They sustain good communications with parents and keep their own safeguarding training under review so that they continue to be well informed of safeguarding issues.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- The quality of teaching is good, and in the early years it is excellent. At its previous inspection, the school was asked to accelerate learning further. It has done this well, in particular in developing questioning skills and ensuring that pupils know how to improve their work.
- Teaching is not outstanding because teachers' high expectations are not always reflected in the quality and quantity of pupils' work across all subjects of the curriculum. This is mostly due to the lack of time given to subjects other than English and mathematics. Work is required to gather evidence of pupils' achievement in all areas and check that it matches that of the best.
- The focus of senior leaders on securing high-quality training for all teaching staff, particularly in mathematics, has paid dividends. In English and mathematics teachers plan lessons well and they ensure that resources are available to meet pupils' needs. Teachers and teaching assistants work together effectively. Pupils with a disability and those with special educational needs are helped to understand their work and find learning interesting.
- The assessment system introduced in September is used effectively by staff and is providing senior leaders with an accurate picture of pupils' progress across year groups. Teachers work collaboratively within school and with teachers in other schools locally, to make sure their assessments are accurate. Moderation exercises in English and mathematics are raising expectations of what pupils can achieve. In the early years, assessment of children's learning is very effective because it is thorough and used well to plan the next steps and help children develop further.
- The marking and feedback policy asks pupils to engage in a dialogue with teachers about their learning. In English lessons, in line with the school's policy, pupils are given time to act on the advice given and use this time well. Pupils in Year 4, for example, could talk with their peers about how they were developing the features of their play scripts. Discussing content and punctuation with their classmates and the teacher was helpful in improving their work.
- There is a consistent approach to teaching reading, ensuring that teachers build on the learning in the discrete phonics lessons (phonics is the sound that letters make in words). Teachers' good subject knowledge allows them to pick up on pupils' errors. Teachers then follow this up with groups and individual pupils. Pupils who speak English as an additional language learn to read quickly.
- The quality of teaching in mathematics has benefited from specific attention since the previous inspection. Leaders have analysed assessment information to ensure that weaker aspects were swiftly tackled. They have implemented a systematic and structured approach to teaching mathematics. Teachers use questioning increasingly well to probe pupils' understanding and encourage them to explain their reasoning. Pupils find the 'Times Tables Awards' stimulating and fun.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils say the school is 'awesome'. They enjoy working hard and trying their best. They are successful learners, even when teaching is less effective than it could be. Pupils look after one another, their books and equipment well.
- Pupils learn to become active participants in their local community and beyond as a result of the wide range of opportunities provided by the school.

- Pupils learn how to reduce risks to themselves in their everyday lives, including when using the internet. They are taught effective strategies to help them evaluate risks for themselves. The youngest children were seen applying safe strategies during the inspection, saying that they had to be 'well behaved in the queue when carrying their lunch'.
- Pupils learn to appreciate one another's views and beliefs. New pupils feel welcome as a result. Pupils who speak little English make friends very quickly because they are listened to and given time to express themselves.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils understand that excellent behaviour is required to learn well. They continue to behave well even when not closely supervised.
- The behaviour of the youngest children, in the Nursery and Reception classes, is exemplary.
- Pupils play safely together and show consideration for the needs and views of others.
- Bullying and other forms of discriminatory behaviour are very rare. Pupils say that any bullying is dealt with immediately. They have no hesitation telling an adult if they need help.
- A very small number of parents who spoke to the lead inspector or responded to the Ofsted online questionnaire are concerned about a few cases of bullying. Inspectors found that any incidents are thoroughly investigated. Bullying is not tolerated.
- Learning is not interrupted by poor behaviour because pupils listen respectfully to staff.
- Attendance and punctuality are very good. Attendance is above the national average. Senior leaders ensure that pupils from all groups attend equally well.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Outcomes for pupils are good, especially in English and mathematics. Senior leaders and governors ensure that pupils make good progress from their starting points. A significantly higher proportion of pupils meet or exceed the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics than is seen nationally by the end of Year 2. In Years 3 and 4 pupils continue to make good progress.
- The relentless focus on assessment and development of speaking and listening ensures that pupils make outstanding progress in developing their skills in the early years. By the end of Year 1 in 2015, nearly all pupils reached the expected standard in the phonics screening check. The few who needed to catch up did so by the end of Year 2.
- The proportion of the most-able pupils who attain a higher than expected level at Key Stage 1 is above the national average, and significantly so in writing. Many pupils continue to do well in Years 3 and 4 and make at least expected progress in English and mathematics.
- With relatively small numbers of disadvantaged pupils in each year group, data about their attainment are not always reliable and can fluctuate year on year. Nonetheless, the disadvantaged pupils currently at the school make good progress and leaders are successful in closing the gaps between their outcomes and other pupils in the school and nationally. In 2015, the few disadvantaged pupils achieved well by the end of Years 2 and 4.
- Pupils' outcomes in subjects other than English and mathematics are mostly good. For example, in physical education pupils take part in a range of competitive sports and achieve well. There are some good displays in school showing steady progress in the arts. In some classes and subjects, however, evidence of good or outstanding outcomes is limited.
- Pupils enjoy reading for pleasure and make frequent use of the library, although teachers are not checking whether pupils are choosing books that will broaden their knowledge of different types of books, and complement the scheme-based reading books used in class.
- The small number of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress from their different starting points. They achieve as well as their classmates and gaps in learning are quickly identified to review their individual targets.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language make very good progress in response to the close attention teachers pay to the welfare and learning needs of individuals. Some pupils arrive at the school with a very limited knowledge of English but quickly catch up. Teachers and learning support assistants are skilled at modelling accurate spoken English. These pupils try very hard and have an exceptionally positive attitude to learning.

Early years provision

is outstanding

- Outcomes for children by the end of the early years have improved since the last inspection and are now outstanding. Children enter with a range of starting points but most are at least typical of their age. Some have well-developed skills on entry to the Nursery and Reception classes.
- Children make excellent progress in all areas of learning so that the proportion attaining a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year, already better than national in 2014, was even higher in 2015 and well above the national average. Children are exceptionally well prepared to move on to Year 1.
- Well-established routines ensure that children are safe and happy.
- Leadership of early years is very good. The early years leader has taken effective action to improve the quality of teaching. She ensures that teachers keep a sharp focus on the starting points of children in reading, writing and mathematics. She checks that they plan interesting, accessible activities, both indoors and outdoors, although there is scope to make even better use of the outdoor facilities.
- The particularly strong emphasis on developing children's use of speech helps them to persevere when faced with challenging tasks. Phonics is taught well. Children learn new sounds quickly.
- Children benefit from a wide range of carefully considered activities and events which help them to understand the core values of the school from an early age and make rapid progress in their personal development. For example, boys were seen to collaborate very well to make the best gingerbread man. The use of a forest school and extra-curricular activities strengthen these values further.
- The views of children and parents are taken into account by the early years leader when planning improvements. Parents appreciate the opportunity to express their views and value the information they receive about their child's learning. Links with external agencies are strong and staff have access to good advice and training.

School details

Unique reference number	109506
Local authority	Bedford Borough
Inspection number	10001102

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

Type of school	Lower school
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	3–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	330
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Victoria Cromwell
Headteacher	Helen Ward
Telephone number	01234 300100
Website	http://www.hazeldeneschool.co.uk/
Email address	hazeldenelower@schools.bedfordshire.gov.uk
Date of previous inspection	23–24 May 2011

Information about this school

- Hazeldene Lower School is larger than the average-sized primary school. It has two classes in each year group.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language, although increasing, is below average.
- The early years consists of one Nursery and two full-time Reception classes.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for pupil premium funding is below average. This is additional funding provided by the government to support disadvantaged pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below average.
- There is provision for extended care before and after school (the Care Club) for five days a week on the school site.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in all classrooms. The headteacher took part in joint observations with inspectors and attended all inspection team meetings.
- Observations were made of pupils' behaviour at the beginning of the day, at lunchtimes, breaktimes and when they were moving around the school. Pupils' behaviour was also observed in the classroom. Inspectors spoke informally with pupils in the playground and dinner hall.
- Meetings were held with pupils, staff, governors, school leaders and some subject leaders.
- The lead inspector had a telephone conversation with the school's improvement partner.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read, and looked at work in pupils' books and on display.
- They observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents including minutes from meetings, the school's evaluation of its own performance and its development plan. Behaviour and attendance records and information relating to safeguarding were also scrutinised.
- Inspectors took account of 34 staff questionnaires and 86 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire (Parent View). They also spoke to parents at the beginning of the day. An evaluation of the school's own questionnaire to parents in November 2015 was also considered.
- The lead inspector visited the Care Club at the end of the day and spoke with staff.

Inspection team

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James Richards	Ofsted Inspector
Sally Taggart	Ofsted Inspector

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