

Howes Community Primary School

Palermo Avenue, Cheylesmore, Coventry, West Midlands CV3 5EH

Inspection dates

16–17 October 2018

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

- Leaders, governors and staff believe that the school exists to serve its pupils as well as possible. They seek to do all they can to provide the best. This is why the school has improved since the previous inspection and keeps getting better.
- As a result, pupils' personal development is exceptionally well promoted. Pupils experience an impressive range of opportunities that broaden their horizons. This helps them to become confident, self-assured and ambitious.
- The quality of teaching has improved notably since the previous inspection. Teachers use their knowledge about what pupils can and cannot do well to plan appropriately challenging work. Consequently, pupils make good progress.
- As a result, attainment is rising. Most pupils are currently working at appropriate standards for their ages. The number reaching and exceeding these expected standards is increasing all the time.
- Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities achieve very well. Similarly, pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress.
- Pupils behave well. They follow instructions in class and work hard. They are kind to one another in lessons and at breaktimes. They are polite to adults and welcoming to visitors.
- Children settle well into the early years. They make good progress across the Nursery and Reception classes. As a result, most are well prepared for the demands of the national curriculum by the time they start Year 1.
- Leaders have ensured that the school provides an exciting and well-taught curriculum. Therefore, pupils enjoy their learning and achieve well in a wide range of subjects.
- Leaders drive improvements with focus and determination. They have systematically tackled the weaknesses found at the last inspection. They know exactly what works well for pupils and where issues remain. Leaders take decisive and effective action to remedy problems when they occur.
- There are weaknesses in the teaching of phonics and early reading. As a result, some pupils struggle to read confidently in key stage 1 and as they move into key stage 2. Leaders have begun to address this issue. However, there is more to do.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure the plans to improve the teaching of reading are implemented effectively by:
 - introducing a systematic, synthetic phonics programme that quickly builds pupils' knowledge of letter sounds in the early years and Year 1
 - making sure that the books pupils read help them to practise the sounds they have learned, and do not contain words that cannot be decoded using phonics, until they have become proficient early readers
 - making sure that pupils understand the meaning of the words in the books they are given, so that they can focus on understanding the text as a whole.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders and governors have a clear vision for the school. They want to provide the very best care and education for pupils. During the inspection, leaders repeatedly captured the culture of the school in a single sentence, 'It's all about the children.'
- Leaders are turning this vision into reality through their drive and determination. The quality of education is improving all the time. The provision for pupils' personal development is exceptional. As a result, pupils are willing learners and make good progress in most classes.
- Senior leaders skilfully evaluate the quality of education. They check pupils' progress frequently. This informs their understanding of the quality of teaching. When they spot weakness, they draw up sensible action plans. They provide staff with relevant training, support or advice. The senior team is clear about what difference they expect this to make. They check if it is working quickly enough, adding more support if necessary. This is why the quality of teaching has improved strongly.
- Leaders believe that pupils' development as future citizens is critical. They seek continuously ways to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development better. The school's curriculum and its highly inclusive ethos contribute very strongly to this. Pupils are involved in the everyday running of the school and influence its strategic development. They genuinely respect others and take responsibility for their actions. They are well prepared for life in British society.
- The curriculum provides a wealth of stimulating experiences that motivates pupils and helps them to build knowledge in a wide range of subjects. Some subjects are taught together as topics. These are organised cleverly so that pupils take responsibility for what they learn. Pupils choose from a menu of tasks. This enables them to learn in ways that suit them best. As a result, learning is meaningful and memorable.
- The curriculum is enriched substantially by a vast array of projects in which pupils work with local, national and international communities. These projects build pupils' self-esteem and interpersonal skills. They also raise pupils' ambitions for their futures.
- Following a review of the use of the pupil premium, disadvantaged pupils now make good progress. Similarly, pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities benefit from judicious use of the extra money they receive. Leaders use the primary school sports premium very well. As a result, pupils and their families are learning to live healthy lifestyles.
- Leaders correctly have concerns about the quality of teaching of reading. They have begun to tackle the issue. As a result, reading has a much higher profile around the school than before. Pupils are reading more widely. Many say they are enjoying books more. However, plans to improve the teaching of fundamental reading skills are still at an early stage of implementation. This is why weaknesses remain in the teaching of phonics and early reading for younger pupils.

Governance of the school

- Governance is effective. This is because governors:
 - have a strong vision for the school to serve its community as well as possible
 - keep themselves well informed about the quality of education
 - challenge leaders routinely and hold them to account for the impact of their actions
 - oversee effective use of the additional funding received for particular pupils, including the pupil premium for disadvantaged pupils, the primary school sports funding and funding for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities
 - ensure that financial decisions are made soundly on the basis that they must be of benefit to the school's pupils.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- A culture of care and vigilance makes pupils' welfare and well-being the top priority for all staff. They take any concern, no matter how small, very seriously. Leaders do whatever they can to provide the help that pupils and their families need. Parents appreciate this very much. They trust the school to protect their children and value the support they receive.
- Leaders meticulously ensure that only suitable adults come into school. Staff and visitors are checked thoroughly and are well informed about their responsibility for keeping pupils safe. Staff and governors are well trained in how to protect pupils from harm in and out of school. For example, they know how to spot indicators that pupils may be at risk from child sexual exploitation, domestic violence, female genital mutilation or radicalisation and extremism.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Pupils know that teachers care about them and think they can do well. Therefore, pupils feel safe in class and are motivated to do well. They challenge themselves and take risks with tricky work.
- Teachers assess accurately what pupils know and use this information to pitch work carefully. Consequently, work is rarely too easy or too difficult.
- Teachers involve pupils in choosing a level of difficulty that suits them. They offer varying degrees of challenge. Pupils know these as the 'Chilli Challenges – mild, medium, hot'. Teachers encourage pupils to try a task that is challenging but achievable. If a pupil chooses a task that is too easy, teachers encourage them to move on to something harder. Similarly, if a pupil is struggling with the chosen task, teachers offer help or suggest something simpler.
- Teachers and teaching assistants skilfully question pupils to check their understanding. This helps them ensure that pupils' work is right for them. In addition, teachers use questions to help pupils connect separate pieces of knowledge. This builds pupils'

understanding and helps them to think critically.

- Teaching assistants contribute much to pupils' learning, particularly pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language. Subtle and sensitive support in lessons helps pupils complete their work successfully. As a result, they make good progress.
- Teaching in the specially resourced unit helps hearing-impaired pupils learn to communicate effectively. It also helps them develop secure basic reading, writing and mathematics skills. Staff from the unit support their pupils well when they join the mainstream classes in the afternoon. As a result, hearing-impaired pupils have full access to the rich and dynamic curriculum.
- Teachers make clear to pupils the purpose of each lesson. This means that pupils see the value of completing the tasks to a high standard. This helps make the lesson content memorable.
- The teaching of mathematics has improved notably since the previous inspection. This is testament to the high-quality training provided to teachers and their willingness to act upon the advice received. As a result, pupils manipulate numbers more confidently and are learning to reason mathematically. Therefore, standards in mathematics are rising quickly in most classes.
- Similarly, teachers are confident in the teaching of writing. Teachers generally check meticulously that pupils' work is of an acceptable standard. They are quick to point out incorrect spellings, grammatical errors or untidy presentation. As a result, the quality of writing in pupils' books has improved considerably since the previous inspection and keeps getting better.
- The teaching of reading has improved a little since the previous inspection, particularly in key stage 2. Many pupils enjoy reading and read voraciously. They are keen to talk about their favourite books and can read fluently, confidently and expressively.
- However, the teaching of phonics and the early skills of reading is not effective. The phonics programme lacks structure and rigour. Its content is derived from several, very different, approaches. Teachers try hard to use the guidance and resources available to teach effective phonics sessions. Nevertheless, the lack of a clear strategy means that some pupils do not acquire secure-enough knowledge about letters and the sounds they make. As a result, they find reading difficult.
- Some of the books that pupils read are unsuitable for those who have not grasped the full range of letter sounds. Such books contain letter sounds that pupils have yet to learn or words that cannot be decoded by using phonics alone. This confuses and frustrates pupils. It diminishes some pupils' enjoyment of reading.
- Similarly, some pupils' reading is hampered because they do not understand many of the words in their books. Consequently, they lose the thread of the text. If pupils are still struggling with phonics, this adds another demand. Reading becomes too challenging. These pupils wrestle with too much new knowledge at a time. This is another reason why some pupils dislike reading and make little progress.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- This is because the culture of the school is one in which all staff strive to provide the best experience for pupils. As a result, pupils are confident, self-assured, happy learners who play an active part in the life of the school.
- Pupils have many opportunities to take meaningful responsibility. They take these seriously. They are proud to be sports leaders, young ambassadors, library monitors, play leaders, peer mediators, or members of the eco council and school council. This gives pupils a strong sense of belonging. They are fiercely proud of, and highly committed to, their school.
- Staff try to give pupils experience of meeting people from as wide a variety of backgrounds and different walks of life as possible. This is why they involve pupils in such an impressive range of large-scale projects. For example, pupils have worked with the University of Warwick to design and build working robotic devices. Other projects have led to pupils travelling abroad to Italy or Greece. A new project, themed around the Tokyo 2020 Olympics, is currently underway. It is anticipated that some pupils will visit Japan for the games.
- Similarly, staff bring a diverse range of visitors into school. This term, for example, pupils have met an author and members of a professional ice hockey team. This contributes much to pupils' strong interest in diversity, tolerance of difference and respect for all. This is demonstrated in the warm welcome pupils extend to others who join their classes during the school year. They enjoy finding out about their new classmates. In particular, they enjoy learning about the increasingly wide range of languages spoken by the newcomers.
- Pupils almost always treat each other kindly. Bullying is rare. Staff take any incidents seriously. They work with all involved, pupils and their families, to resolve the matter.
- The school promotes pupils' welfare in many ways. For example, staff have set up a facility (known as 'The Nest') which supports intervention and pupils who are experiencing emotional stress or trauma. In another example, staff aim to promote pupils' well-being beyond the school gates. All pupils are encouraged to join local sporting groups and teams. Staff help them find a suitable organisation and assist them in the joining process. This helps pupils, and their families, to lead more healthy lifestyles.
- Similarly, staff teach pupils ways of protecting themselves. For example, pupils know the risks of online activity. They use appropriate strategies to minimise the dangers.
- The drive to promote personal development and welfare is highly inclusive. For example, primary school sports funding is used to ensure pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities participate fully in quality sporting activity and meaningful competitions. Similarly, the school ensures disadvantaged pupils have full access to the wider opportunities, such as the trips to other countries. These examples are typical of the culture of the school. The school believes that everyone is important, and everyone

deserves the best.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils behave well around school. They move around corridors calmly and sensibly. They willingly hold doors open for others. They speak kindly to each other and courteously to adults.
- Breaktimes are enjoyable. Pupils play happily together on the whole. If friends fall out or someone needs a playmate, older pupils, as play leaders or peer mentors, are always on hand to help. Other pupils, called sports leaders, help to organise activities that keep pupils busy and active at lunchtimes. Pupils like these activities and say they help them 'let off steam' before going back into class.
- Pupils follow instructions without question. As a result, lessons flow smoothly and little time is wasted. Most work diligently at all times. Just occasionally, one or two lose focus when they have finished a task. They sometimes become a little silly or chatty. However, this is quickly spotted by teachers and the pupils' attention is brought straight back to their work. Therefore, it does not disrupt learning.
- Pupils' attendance continues to improve. This is because of the sustained and concerted effort to raise its profile and to support families to get their children to school regularly and on time. Some pupils have significant medical needs, which result in unavoidably long absences. However, some families still allow their children to stay off school too often. Staff keep a close eye on each pupils' attendance. Senior staff take whatever action they see as necessary to ensure pupils are not put at risk by not attending school often enough.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils' progress in all subjects has improved notably since the previous inspection. As a result, their attainment is rising rapidly following years of underachievement. Most pupils are now working at appropriate standards for their ages.
- Pupils now make good progress in most year groups and in a wide range of subjects. Some variation remains, but it is diminishing all the time as the quality of teaching continues to improve.
- Lower-ability pupils achieve well. This is because work is well matched to their understanding. They receive effective support that helps overcome their difficulties. As a result, they make strong progress towards attaining the standards they should for their ages.
- Higher attainers are generally well challenged. As a result, many are making swift progress. Therefore, they now attain standards that are much closer to those they should, given their capabilities.
- Pupils who have SEN and disabilities make strong progress. Hearing-impaired pupils achieve well in the specialist unit. They are well supported to access the wider curriculum when they join the mainstream classes. As a result, they make good

progress across a wide range of subjects.

- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress. Their progress is now close to that of other pupils in the school and is improving. It is catching up towards that of other pupils nationally.
- Pupils who are new to understanding English quickly acquire a working knowledge of the language. This is a result of the carefully planned strategy to give them the basic skills they need to engage in conversation. Skilled teaching and effective additional support help these pupils make good progress across the curriculum. As a result, they achieve well.
- In recent years, many pupils have been ill prepared for the demands of the national curriculum at the start of Year 1. They lacked basic reading, writing and mathematics skills. Teachers in key stage 1 had to compensate for the failings of the past. Pupils successfully acquired the necessary skills and began to catch up to where they should be. However, it was too late for them to reach the standards they should have by the end of Year 2.
- Starting points for Year 1 pupils are now better. This is because the early years provision has improved. Therefore, more pupils in key stage 1 are already working at suitable standards for their ages in writing and mathematics. As a result, their attainment by the end of Year 2 is improving.
- Most pupils enjoy reading and read often. Many now make good progress, particularly in Years 5 and 6. However, weaknesses in the teaching of phonics and early reading continue to hamper some pupils' progress. The quality of teaching is improving, but not enough to ensure all pupils acquire secure phonic understanding. This means that some pupils in key stage 1 and lower key stage 2 struggle to make good progress.

Early years provision

Good

- The early years provision has improved since the previous inspection. This is because it is now well led. Children are happy and safe. All statutory welfare requirements are met. Teaching is effective. Children achieve well.
- Following the previous inspection, leaders took a 'back-to-basics' approach to addressing the weaknesses identified by inspectors. They reviewed every aspect of the provision and worked out how to make the necessary improvements. Leaders implemented the required changes carefully and systematically. This is why the early years now provide a good quality of education.
- When children join the Nursery and Reception classes, many struggle to communicate their feelings or manage their own physical and emotional needs. Teachers quickly assess what children need to help them learn and put in place what is required. This gets children off to a good start.
- Children soon learn to follow the daily routines. Adults show them how to behave well. As a result, children soon learn to follow instructions, listen to the teacher, share toys and take turns. They play sensibly alongside one another.
- Teachers monitor children's skills as they develop. They plan interesting tasks that help children practise these skills and develop new ones.

- This effective teaching ensures children make good progress in all areas of learning. As a result, children now are better placed to start Year 1 than others have been in the past.
- Teachers place great emphasis on helping children learn to speak clearly and understand what others are saying. As a result, children begin to overcome their communication difficulties. Additional help is provided for children who are new to understanding English and those who have specific speech and language difficulties. This helps break down these additional barriers to children's learning.
- Teachers work in close partnership with parents. This ensures children are ready to start school. In addition, staff in the early years give parents lots of advice about how they can better support their children's learning at home. Parents really appreciate this support. They say it has been very helpful to them.
- Leaders have identified that the phonics and early reading programme in the early years is not effective. Plans are in place to improve it. These are at a very early stage of implementation and so have not had time to make a difference.

School details

Unique reference number	134426
Local authority	Coventry
Inspection number	10048251

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	177
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sue Roberts
Headteacher	Sioux Cooke
Telephone number	02476 411711
Website	www.howesprimary.co.uk
Email address	admin@howes.coventry.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	24–25 May 2016

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than average.
- Around half of its pupils are of White British origin. The rest come from a variety of ethnic backgrounds.
- A significant number of pupils arrive at the school at different points during the school year in all year groups. Many of these are new to understanding English.
- The school has an on-site specially resourced provision for hearing-impaired pupils. It currently caters for 12 pupils aged 4 to 11.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils' learning by visiting lessons in all classes and looking at the work in their books.
- Inspectors met with: the headteacher and deputy headteacher; other school staff; members of the governing body; a representative of the local authority; a group of teachers and support staff; and two groups of pupils. Inspectors spoke informally with other staff and pupils as they moved around the school.
- Inspectors took account of the 11 staff survey responses, six submissions to the pupil survey and the 9 responses to the Parent View survey. Inspectors also spoke to parents at the beginning and end of the school day.
- Inspectors heard pupils read.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents including: leaders' checks on how well the school is doing and their plans for improvement; minutes of meetings; information about pupils' progress and attainment; and records relating to pupils' attendance, behaviour and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Sandy Hayes, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Jason Brooks

Ofsted Inspector

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