

# Halfway Nursery Infant School

Station Road, Halfway, Sheffield, South Yorkshire S20 3GU

## Inspection dates

13–14 March 2019

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The headteacher is an inspirational leader. She has high expectations and a clear vision for the school. She is relentless in her drive to build on the strengths previously seen in the school.
- Leaders have nurtured commitment from staff through ensuring that they feel valued. Staff are exceptionally proud to work in the school.
- Subject leaders are highly ambitious for pupils. They have excellent subject knowledge and use this to ensure that teaching is high quality.
- Teachers and teaching assistants use skilful questioning to challenge pupils effectively, often stretching and deepening their thinking, especially in English and mathematics.
- Governors are astute and passionate about getting the best for the school community. Members of the governing body have a broad range of skills and provide highly effective challenge to leaders.
- For the most part, pupils are well challenged. However, the most able pupils are not always consistently challenged in key stage 1, especially when working independently.
- Leaders are effectively improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in phonics and in science. However, improvements are still being embedded and are yet to reflect in published school performance information.
- Children in the early years thrive in an exceptionally well-run setting. They enter the early years with skills and abilities below those seen typically. Through highly effective teaching, they make outstanding progress.
- Excellent arrangements for supporting vulnerable pupils ensure that they thrive and flourish in school. Pupils say that they feel safe in school and know whom to ask for help.
- Pupils' behaviour is impeccable because the expectations of all staff are high. Pupils' well-developed vocabulary and speaking skills enable them to express their thoughts clearly and to appreciate each other's points of view.
- Staff are highly skilled in providing pupils with a warm and caring environment that greatly supports their personal development and mental well-being.
- Pupils enjoy a broad, balanced and engaging curriculum that provides them with enriching experiences to develop their interests, skills and knowledge across a wide array of subjects.
- Parents and carers are extremely happy with the school. They highly value and appreciate the quality of care and support their children receive.

## **Full report**

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

- Further develop the quality of teaching in key stage 1 by making sure that the most able pupils receive a consistent level of challenge, especially when working independently.
- Embed recent improvements to the teaching of science and phonics so that pupils' outcomes by the end of Year 2 are above average.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Outstanding

- Since her appointment, the headteacher has quickly gained the trust and respect of staff, parents and pupils alike. She has high aspirations for all pupils to achieve the best possible outcomes. She has effectively built on strengths previously seen in the school. Her drive for excellence is shared with leaders across the school.
- A sense of teamwork permeates the school. Pupils, parents, staff and governors are a united team and are proud of their school. Parents who spoke to inspectors, and those who completed Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, were unanimous in their positive views of the school. One parent said, 'The whole school is a friendly and nurturing environment and I couldn't wish for a better start for the children than here.'
- Leaders at all levels are passionate and tenacious. They are extremely effective in driving improvements in all areas of school. Leaders are proactive, knowledgeable and work cohesively together. They have an excellent understanding of their areas of responsibility and use it to bring about positive change. The systems in place for middle leadership are very well established and clear. As a result, when leaders change areas of responsibility, for example due to staff changes, leaders who are new to their subject quickly understand the strengths and areas for development and therefore sustain improvements.
- Checks carried out on the quality of teaching are systematic and effective. Leaders work closely with staff to evaluate where teaching can be improved. Feedback to staff is precise and helpful. As a result, the impact of teaching is at least good, with much being outstanding. The quality and impact of teaching, learning and assessment are not yet outstanding overall because they are not fully consistent across all classes and/or subjects.
- Leaders use the pupil premium funding very effectively. The high-quality pastoral work, alongside well-trained teaching assistants, ensures that disadvantaged pupils are making similar rates of progress to other pupils at the school. The gap in attainment is closing in all year groups.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive high-quality support. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo), meets the needs of all identified pupils through thorough assessments and comprehensive plans. Special-needs teaching assistants receive appropriate training and support to enable them to understand specific needs, such as autism or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. As a result, pupils with SEND make good progress and play a full and active part in school life.
- The rich and varied curriculum fosters pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development throughout. Pupils learn about other cultures and study different religions. The breadth of the curriculum ensures that pupils are very well prepared for life in modern Britain. Pupils know about British values and can discuss what they are and how they reflect school life. One pupil said: 'They're the rule of law and democracy. We know what democracy is as it means having a choice. We have a choice when we vote for the prizes we want as a class.'

- Creative elements run throughout each topic, through which pupils receive memorable learning experiences. Pupils are fully engaged in their learning through 'super starters' and 'fantastic finishes'. This is when a creative or motivational event is planned to engage pupils in a topic. For example, inspectors saw that pupils were captivated when they walked into their classroom to see that a dinosaur had been in and broken a window.
- Leaders think carefully about how the curriculum meets the needs of the pupils in the school. They have a clear curriculum vision that focuses on how the school's curriculum will contribute to developing pupil characteristics for example being responsible citizens, being aspirational and forward-thinking, as well as being reflective and resilient learners.
- Staff are all proud to work at this school. They say that the new headteacher is very conscious of workload. Staff said: 'There are no 'unnecessary' tasks put on staff. She is conscious of the general day-to-day workloads and pressures of teaching and provides support and time wherever possible. Staff are encouraged and respected in discussing workload. Honest and open conversations can be had about what works and what doesn't work and how reductions can be made while maintaining high expectations and outcomes.'

## **Governance of the school**

- The governing body is exceedingly well led. Governors have a broad range of skills and are determined to get the very best for the school community. They have been instrumental in driving improvement in the school. For example, governors all have an area of accountability related to the school development plan and they monitor this closely, ensuring that activities are having a positive effect.
- Members of the governing body provide excellent challenge and support to leaders on all aspects of school improvement. They carry out regular visits to school to check that actions from the school improvement plan are happening in practice. They probe attainment and progress information during meetings. They are astute in their questioning and challenge leaders very effectively. As a result, they have a strong understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the school.
- Governors have a clear understanding of their safeguarding responsibilities and carry out checks to make sure that leaders are following protocols outlined in the school's safeguarding policy.
- The governors have a secure understanding of any financial restraints the school has and are proactive to ensure that these do not affect learning. They link closely with the school's parent-teacher association (PTA) by having a member of the PTA on the governing body. This has meant that all parents have a clear understanding of what they are fundraising for and how this has a positive impact on the pupils.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The level of care and consideration for pupils' safety is exceptionally strong. The designated safeguarding leads have well-organised systems in place to ensure that concerns are recorded and followed up rigorously.

- Training for staff is regular and purposeful. They have an excellent understanding of their responsibilities and report concerns in a timely way. Staff are clear about legal guidance on aspects such as female genital mutilation and the 'Prevent' duty. Leaders carry out regular checks to make sure that staff understand changes in the school's safeguarding policy.
- The SENCo provides positive early help to all parents. This support is having an excellent effect on the way parents engage with the school and provides an additional layer of care and safety to pupils at the school.
- The strong safeguarding culture in the school is reflected well in pupils' understanding of how to keep themselves safe. Safety is taught well in the curriculum and through assemblies. For example, the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) visited school to talk to the children about the 'pants rule'.
- Pupils talk knowledgeably, but in an age-appropriate way, about different risks when using the internet. They know how to keep themselves safe in situations such as crossing roads and walking to school.
- All staff ensure that all pupils are kept safe through knowing all pupils. They identify any additional needs the pupils may have and do their best to ensure that any vulnerability does not have a detrimental effect on learning and life in school.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

**Good**

- Strong relationships between staff and pupils mean that pupils work hard and want to do well. Pupils get excited about their learning and work happily together. Pupils are not afraid to make mistakes.
- Teachers take the time to get to know pupils as individuals and successfully match work to meet their needs. Teachers have accurate subject knowledge and, as a result, model learning very effectively to pupils. Little time is wasted in lessons, and pupils progress well.
- The quality of questioning is strong. Teachers and teaching assistants ask a good range of questions to deepen pupils' understanding. Teachers use questioning very skilfully during lessons to clarify misconceptions or to provide further challenge. Pupils are also beginning to ask questions of their own learning. For example, a child in Reception was overheard saying, 'How can I improve this?'
- A greater emphasis has been placed on challenging the most able pupils in lessons. Where work is well structured, pupils are stretched to apply their knowledge and skills to more complex situations. However, there is still work to do to ensure that the most able pupils receive a consistent level of challenge, especially when working independently. When work is not effectively challenging for the most able pupils, the quality of learning can slow.
- The teaching of mathematics has had a successful focus. Mathematics leaders have had a significant effect on improving current pupils' progress and outcomes. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use it to help ensure that pupils know how to calculate accurately and efficiently. Pupils regularly apply their mathematical understanding through problem solving. For example, pupils in Year 1 were seen using toy eggs to practise counting in twos. They then moved their learning forward to

applying this to repeated addition. Teachers stretch pupils by asking them to explain and reason in their mathematical thinking. Pupils are frequently given opportunities to apply their learning to challenging reasoning problems.

- The effective teaching of reading enables pupils to make good progress. The teaching of phonics has been revised and is now enabling pupils to make much better progress, although this is still being embedded and so does not yet reflect in published outcomes in the phonics screening check. Teaching ensures that pupils use their phonics skills successfully to decode unfamiliar words and apply these skills in their writing. Teachers skilfully equip pupils with a range of strategies to work out the meaning of different words. As a result, most pupils read well and have a growing vocabulary. Reading is high profile throughout the school and is also reinforced during non-formal activities such as at Breakfast Club, where adults listen to pupils read.
- Teaching assistants work closely with teachers to provide valuable support to pupils with SEND. Staff have very positive relationships with individual pupils and work effectively to motivate them to learn. As a result, this group of pupils make good progress from their starting points.
- The teaching of the wider curriculum, including music, physical education, art and history, is of a high quality. Pupils are expected to use the skills learned in English and mathematics in all curriculum areas. Pupils take an immense pride in all of the work they produce and ensure that it is of the same high quality that is seen in English and mathematics books.
- The teaching of science is improving rapidly. The science leader has raised the profile, by ensuring that science is a key driver for year-group topics and through frequent and effective monitoring. The school's science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) club has been developed to enable pupils, including those who are eligible for additional funding, to be exposed to challenging scientific concepts and develop a love of science. These improvements are yet to be embedded and, as such, do not yet reflect in pupils' outcomes by the end of Year 2.
- Pupils work cooperatively, and teachers provide lots of opportunities for them to collaborate and share ideas. Pupils are very flexible learners, and this reflects their self-confidence.
- Homework is well planned and supports pupils' progress and the development of their independent learning skills. Pupils and parents are given home-learning packs to support learning at home, rather than more formal styles of homework. The school believes passionately in ensuring that pupils have experiences at home. As a result, parents support learning in practical ways, such as playing games with words, reading stories to their children and taking part in the National Trust's '50 things to do before you're 11¾.'

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Outstanding**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.

- Pupils demonstrate an exceptional understanding of the school's values in their behaviours. They work hard and try their best. They do not worry if they do not get things right the first time because they know that an adult or a friend will help them. Pupils willingly offer their thoughts and ideas and listen to each other. As a result, they are confident learners who work well, both together and independently.
- Pupils demonstrate excellent attitudes to learning because they are well motivated. They contribute to lessons with confidence.
- The school's breakfast and after-school club is a vibrant place, where children feel safe and they are happy to be.
- The inclusion team, led by the headteacher, provides exceptional care and support to pupils, staff and parents. The team is integral to the work of the whole school, putting pupils' welfare at the heart of everything it does. Regular discussions with pupils find out if pupils feel safe and secure. Pupils know that there are people at the school whom they can trust and are actively encouraged to think of a member of staff whom they would go to if they had a concern or worry.
- The school works hard to ensure that pupils have a deep understanding about well-being and mental health. It has termly well-being days, where pupils take part in activities such as yoga and well-being activities, and has assemblies led by professionals such as a doctor to find out about how to keep your body healthy.

## **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils understand and appreciate the whole-school behaviour and reward system because it is used consistently across the school. At the end of the week, pupils are rewarded for their excellent behaviour by being invited to have lunch with the headteacher at her 'disco dinner'. This is where pupils eat their lunch, listen to music and have a dance with the headteacher. Pupils speak with a great deal of pride about when they have been chosen to do this.
- Pupils' behaviour in and around school is impeccable. Pupils are polite and courteous to each other. They respect the positive environment that has been created for them. During playtimes, pupils' behaviour is excellent. Older pupils help take care of the younger children and ensure that they model good behaviour.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school. Over time, attendance is at least in line with the national average. Leaders check pupils' attendance closely and follow up absences promptly. As a result, the number of pupils who are regularly absent from school is declining quickly.
- Records show that bullying or racist name-calling is very rare. Pupils spoken to said that they know about different types of bullying, but that 'it doesn't happen here.' Another pupil said: 'If someone came from a different country, then we would learn about where they are from. We are lucky here; we have friends from lots of different countries.'

## Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Children make an excellent start to school in the early years. By the end of Reception, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development is above average. From starting points that are typically below average, this represents outstanding progress.
- Pupils continue to achieve well in key stage 1. By the end of Year 2, pupils achieve good outcomes. In 2016 and 2017, pupils' attainment was above average in reading, writing and mathematics, both at the expected standard and at greater depth.
- In 2018, outcomes at the end of Year 2 dipped slightly in reading and mathematics; the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standards in these subjects was average. The proportion of pupils reaching greater depth in reading also dipped to average. This dip reflected the very specific needs of pupils in this year group. Inspection evidence shows that an above-average proportion of current pupils in Year 2 are on track to reach, and exceed, the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils currently in key stage 1 are making good progress.
- In 2017, a below-average proportion of pupils reached the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check. Leaders responded swiftly. They have revised the way in which phonics is taught in school. Previous inconsistencies in the quality of phonics teaching have been addressed. The school's approach to teaching phonics now ensures that all pupils have exposure to new phonics learning. Any additional gaps are then addressed through the provision of additional support. Current phonics teaching is strong. Although outcomes are improving rapidly, this is yet to reflect in published school performance information.
- All groups of pupils make good progress. Pupils with SEND make good progress from their starting points because activities are matched closely to their learning needs and they receive a range of appropriate support.
- The school's own assessment information and work seen in current pupils' books show that disadvantaged pupils make good, and in some cases very strong, progress. The difference between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and that of other pupils nationally is now narrowing rapidly because of the intensive support this group of pupils receive and high-quality teaching.
- Typically, the most able pupils achieve well and the proportion of pupils reaching greater depth by the end of Year 2 is often above average. Even so, occasionally, the achievement of most-able pupils in key stage 1 is held back because the work they are given is not consistently challenging. This is particularly the case when pupils work independently.
- In 2017 and 2018, at the end of key stage 1, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in science was below average. The science leader is addressing this through ensuring that high-quality science teaching takes place. Inspection evidence shows that attainment in science is rising. While current Year 2 pupils are on track to reach standards that are in line with other pupils nationally, improvement is yet to reflect in published school performance information.

## Early years provision

## Outstanding

- Children join the Nursery with knowledge and skills that are below typical for their age. From their starting points, children make exceedingly strong progress. By the end of Nursery, the children are working at skills that are typical, and an above-average proportion of children leave the Reception Year reaching a good level of development.
- Teaching in early years is very strong. High expectations and very well-established routines lead children to develop excellent attitudes to learning. Children's learning needs are well met by high-quality teaching both in the indoor classroom and outdoors. Teachers plan activities that are motivating, challenging for all pupils and follow children's interests. All members of staff are highly effective in their promotion of speaking and listening.
- Teachers think carefully about how to engage boys in their learning. Boys are highly motivated and engage with the indoor and outdoor environments independently and, as a result, make strong progress in their learning.
- Children are incredibly resilient and determined to learn. Children concentrate for extended periods of time on their learning. They are rightly proud of their work and are confident enough to share their learning with adults and children in the room.
- Children known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium funding make similar rates of progress to other children in the early years.
- Relationships between staff and children are exemplary. All adults show patience, care and sensitivity. Children are happy, confident and safe. Children flourish because their relationships with staff are consistently warm and positive. Routines are well established and children feel secure because they know exactly what is expected of them. Children's many achievements are noticed and praised frequently. As a result, the early years is a happy and nurturing place for children to learn.
- Safeguarding is effective and all welfare requirements are met. Staff have a thorough understanding of the actions they need to take to keep children safe. Positive transition arrangements when children join the school enable staff to develop strong relationships with parents. Staff know children and their families very well. Consequently, children are safe and well cared for.
- Parents are overwhelmingly happy with the provision in early years. One parent commented: 'My child currently attends the Nursery and I have been blown away by the provision and care taken by all at Halfway Nursery Infant School. The activities and learning opportunities are fantastic; he is always excited by what they have been doing and doesn't realise how much he has been learning.'

## School details

Unique reference number	107038
Local authority	Sheffield
Inspection number	10059079

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

Type of school	Nursery Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	219
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Liz Booth
Headteacher	Paula Bestall
Telephone number	0114 248 2360
Website	<a href="http://www.halfwaynurseryinfantschool.org">www.halfwaynurseryinfantschool.org</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:office@halfway-inf.sheffield.sch.uk">office@halfway-inf.sheffield.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	10–11 December 2013

## Information about this school

- Halfway Nursery Infant School is an average-sized infant school.
- The headteacher was appointed in April 2018.
- The school comprises two classes per year group.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is below the national average, as is the proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan.
- The school has a 78-place Nursery that takes children from the age of three.
- Most pupils are White British. A small number of pupils from a wide range of other ethnic groups also attend the school.
- The school has a breakfast and after-school club.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, acting deputy headteacher and other leaders, including the SENCo, mathematics and science leader. Meetings were also held with a group of pupils and governors, including the chair of the governing body. The inspector spoke to a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors gathered a range of evidence to judge the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. They also observed learning across the school. Observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher and acting deputy headteacher.
- Together with leaders, the inspectors looked in detail at a range of pupils' books and work in different subjects. Inspectors heard pupils read and spoke with pupils throughout the inspection about their learning.
- A range of documentation was examined, including the school's checks on the suitability of adults to work with children and other documentation regarding safer recruitment of staff.
- Leaders made available the school's self-evaluation document, termly assessments, minutes of governing body meetings and documentation regarding child protection.
- The inspectors took into consideration the 39 responses to Parent View and spoke to parents at the beginning of the school day.
- The inspectors also considered responses from 27 staff to the online survey.

## Inspection team

Eve Morris, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Andy Taylor

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
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