

# Halstead Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	118274
<b>Local Authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	379581
<b>Inspection dates</b>	12–13 October 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Sheena MacDonald HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	87
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Steve Grice
<b>Headteacher</b>	Leslie Hawkins
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	28–29 October 2010
<b>School address</b>	Otford Lane Halstead Sevenoaks TN14 7EA
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an additional inspector. The inspectors observed teaching and learning in eight lessons, and carried out two further short drop-in sessions to all classes and small group activities. They visited an assembly and held discussions with the headteacher, senior leaders, a representative from the local authority, governors and pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at improvement plans, monitoring and assessment information, the minutes of the governing body's meetings, policies and procedures relating to safeguarding, case studies and pupils' books. In addition, inspectors considered the responses to questionnaires from staff, pupils and 24 parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Whether pupils' attainment is improving quickly and consistently enough.
- The quality of teaching and learning, and whether the differentiation, challenge and pace are good enough in all lessons to ensure sufficiently rapid progress for all groups.
- The use of assessment at all levels and whether pupils' targets are challenging enough.
- The effectiveness of leaders and managers in tackling the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection and how well they use self-evaluation and monitoring to identify needs, set challenging targets and drive improvement.

## Information about the school

Halstead Primary school is smaller than most primary schools. Most pupils are White British, with a small number of pupils coming from various other ethnic groups, including Roma/Gypsy. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is slightly above the national average. An average proportion of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities. These pupils' needs include speech, language and communication difficulties, emotional, social and behavioural difficulties and autistic spectrum disorder. A private nursery operates on the site and is inspected separately.

At the inspection in October 2010, the school was issued with a notice to improve. An inspector made a monitoring inspection visit in February 2011 and confirmed that the school was making satisfactory progress in addressing its areas for improvement and in raising the pupils' achievement. Since the inspection in 2010, there have been a number of staff changes.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**3**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**3**

## Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

The school is providing a satisfactory education. The vast majority of pupils and parents and carers who returned questionnaires said that pupils enjoy their time in school, and this is reflected in a high attendance rate. In this small school, the pupils know each other and the adults very well and this helps them to feel very safe. They are well cared for, relationships are good and pupils' good behaviour makes a positive contribution to their learning. The school has experienced a great many changes particularly in leadership. Most of the teaching staff and the headteacher joined the school very recently. Despite these changes, parents, carers and pupils have continued to have faith in the school and almost all parents and carers said that they are happy to be part of the school community.

Pupils from all groups, including those with special educational needs, now make satisfactory progress, and attainment has improved to now being broadly average. Effective intervention work last year meant that Year 6 pupils made up a lot of ground during their final year. Despite these improvements, standards are still not high enough, and there is more to be done to bring about the sustained accelerated progress necessary, particularly in Key Stage 2 and in writing, to make up for past weaknesses.

The quality of teaching, learning and the curriculum are strengths in Key Stage 1 so that these pupils are making rapid progress and very much enjoying their learning. In the other three classes, there are inconsistencies in the quality and impact of teaching in different subjects so that overall teaching and the curriculum are satisfactory. While teachers' thorough marking gives the pupils useful guidance, there is more to do to ensure that all teachers have a clear understanding of how well pupils are learning and to identify the next steps needed to move the learning on more rapidly. The match between activities and the different needs of pupils is not always good enough to challenge and extend the learning, particularly of more-able pupils.

The leadership team has made a good start; good liaison with the previous executive headteacher means that leaders have built on the improvements which had been achieved last year. They have quickly established a new team, raised morale and set

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clear direction. Improvements in the quality, accuracy and use of information from the assessment of pupils' progress, allied to careful monitoring, means that the team has an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The focus of monitoring since September has been on ensuring that effective systems, routines and features of effective teaching are in place, and the focus on pupils' learning and speed of progress has been less sharp.

The governing body is increasingly well informed about pupils' attainment and progress. It is, however, over-generous in the judgement of how well the school is doing. As a result, the view as to the improvements which have been achieved and plans for the future are not based on accurate evaluation. Nonetheless, the improvements which have taken place since the last inspection and the clarity of purpose seen on this visit mean that the school has satisfactory capacity to sustain further improvement.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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

- Raise attainment and increase the rate of progress for all pupils, particularly in writing and throughout Key Stage 2 by:
  - embedding the use of information from assessment and giving all pupils work that is sufficiently challenging and matched to their individual needs
  - strengthening the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better and sharing the most effective practice in the school
  - planning more opportunities for pupils to work independently, develop their problem-solving skills and use their initiative.
- Improve the quality and effectiveness of leadership and management by:
  - developing the skills of leaders and managers at all levels and sharpening the focus of monitoring and coaching on pupils' learning and progress
  - ensuring that the governing body achieves an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses so that plans for improvement are challenging but realistic.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****3**

Pupils clearly take pride in their work, and the quality of handwriting and presentation is much improved. There are good examples in all classes of varied and interesting work, such as the poems produced by Key Stage 2 pupils. During the inspection, Saplings class set to work with gusto as detectives seeking out the features of non-fiction books. Pupils discussed their findings with each other and showed tenacity and independence. The rapid progress being made by these pupils is also evident in their books. In other classes, the quality of learning and progress is generally satisfactory. The teachers' understanding varies of pupils' levels and next

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steps in learning so that sometimes, partly due to some aspects of assessment being underdeveloped, the pitch is not quite right and in some lessons the pace of learning is too slow. There are not enough opportunities for pupils to deepen and extend their learning, for example through producing longer pieces of writing or exploring problem-solving activities. As a result, too few pupils achieve at the higher levels for their ages.

Pupils of all ages get on very well together and good examples of this were seen during lunchtimes and in the popular dance club where pupils from different ages cooperated well and took responsibility for others. Pupils take on responsibilities readily, such as planning and carrying out a book sale to raise money for playground equipment. Although achievement in basic skills, including information, communication and technology, has improved, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to develop valuable life skills such as collaborating with others or working independently. Pupils’ social and moral development is good but cultural development is less well developed. Similarly, there are too few opportunities to experience excitement in learning or to reflect on wider issues.

*These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes*

<b>Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils’ learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils’ behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>3</b>

**How effective is the provision?**

Classrooms are well organised, bright and welcoming, with useful displays and celebrations of pupils’ achievements. Teachers manage behaviour well and have warm, positive relationships with the pupils so that there is a good climate for learning throughout the school. Teachers and assistants work well together to make

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

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sure that pupils with particular needs are supported. The quality of teaching varies, however, mainly because of inconsistencies in teachers’ understanding of the link between assessment information and lesson planning. In some lessons, the learning is limited because adults take up too much of the time, which does not allow the pupils sufficient time or scope to develop and extend their learning. The marking of pupils’ work is helpful and there is some excellent practice to build upon where the pupils respond to the marking and extend their learning.

The curriculum is satisfactory and takes account of the needs of different pupils, such as in the provision of small group and individual support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities or those at risk of underachieving. There are some good examples of planning across subjects; examples are the work on geographical differences in food in the Year 3/4 class and the high quality literacy, geography and art work in Year 1/2 which was stimulated by a visit to Bore Place. This is not fully developed across the school and the curriculum is rightly under review.

Pupils are well cared for and, as a result, they feel safe in school. Although there is still more to do, improving assessment systems and the development of the role of the special educational needs coordinator mean that the specific needs of pupils are more carefully identified and supported. There are effective arrangements to support the transition of pupils into school and between classes so that staff are informed and aware of pupils’ individual needs and previous learning. Pupils with medical needs are carefully identified and staff are well trained and know what support is appropriate. The strategies to maintain above average attendance and to improve punctuality have been successful.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils’ needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>3</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

During the last two years, the school was led by executive headteachers whose leadership enabled the school to make satisfactory progress. The new headteacher and senior teacher have had a very positive impact in a relatively short time and all staff are positive about the changes and keen to be part of an improving school. Developing the role of middle leaders already appropriately features in school improvement planning.

Improvements in the quality and use of assessment information and regular

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monitoring mean that the headteacher and senior leader have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and have identified appropriate key priorities for improvement. The school is continuing to collaborate well with local authority colleagues and developing useful partnerships with other local schools to provide appropriate staff development and training.

Systems to ensure the safety and wellbeing of pupils have improved since the last inspection and there are well-organised routines, appropriate staff training and improvements to the security of the school site. The school is aware that further work to ensure that all adults and pupils have a clearer understanding of risk and safety issues would improve this aspect further.

The school is a cohesive community with good links to the local area. A link with a school in Gambia is helping to promote pupils’ understanding of different cultures elsewhere in the world. However, pupils’ appreciation of the diversity of Britain is less well developed. Information is analysed well to identify any variations between groups of pupils and action taken to close gaps. As a result, there are no significant differences in the attainment or participation of different groups. This information is now being analysed even more incisively; for example, a group of older girls have been identified as underachieving in reading and action is being taken to redress this. Overall, the school provides pupils with equality of opportunity and ensures that there is no discrimination.

The governing body is benefiting from increased access to information such as assessment data and members are rigorous in carrying out their statutory duties. However, their evaluation is rather rosy and reflects how far the school has come in the last few years rather than an accurate judgement about where it is now and what still needs to improve quickly.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school’s engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>



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**The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money**

**3**

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make satisfactory progress in the Reception class. Each cohort is small and children’s skills vary; nonetheless, the majority have skills and knowledge which are generally around those expected for their age. By the time they transfer to Year 1, although most reach the expected levels, very few children achieve at the higher levels. The trends over time highlight areas which require improvement such as linking letters and sounds and aspects of mathematics.

The children settle quickly into the life of the school. They feel safe and are confident to ask for help whenever they need it. This is supported by the clear routines and warm relationships between adults and children which contribute well to the children’s personal development and well-being. They play happily together and understand the need to take turns. For example, they are very keen on using the timers to make sure that everyone gets a fair chance to play on the bikes and trikes.

There is a reasonable balance between activities led by the adults and those chosen by the children. The children enjoy the practical activities such as making (and eating) a fruit salad and they particularly enjoy spending time exploring the outdoor area. The school is aware that current provision is not rich or varied enough to enable the children to fully extend their learning. Adults use observations to assess the pupils’ learning but this, and the adults’ use of questioning to develop and extend learning, are also aspects which are currently underdeveloped.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

## Views of parents and carers

The response to the Ofsted questionnaire was about average. Most of the parent and carers who completed and returned questionnaires are positive about all aspects of the school. Almost all believe that their children are safe and happy in school. Several respondents commented on the changes over the past two years and expressed optimism about the most recent changes, particularly in leadership. There is a small but significant minority of parents and carers who are concerned that their children’s progress is not good enough and that the school does not sufficiently help parents and carers to support their children’s learning. The inspection found that

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although pupils' progress was unsatisfactory in the past, it is improving now and is satisfactory overall. The inspection confirmed, and the school agrees, that raising attainment and improving the rate of progress are its key priorities. The school is also aware that communication with parents and carers is an aspect which leaders wish to improve.

### Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Halstead Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 24 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 87 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	9	38	14	58	1	4	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	12	50	10	42	2	8	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	6	25	14	58	4	17	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	4	17	12	50	7	29	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	8	33	13	54	1	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	6	25	14	58	4	17	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	7	29	15	63	2	8	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	6	25	10	42	3	13	1	4
The school meets my child’s particular needs	6	25	14	58	4	17	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	8	33	11	46	4	17	1	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	7	29	13	54	1	4	1	4
The school is led and managed effectively	9	38	13	54	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	8	33	13	54	1	4	1	4

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



14 October 2011

Dear Pupils

### **Inspection of Halstead Primary School, Sevenoaks TN14 7EA**

Thank you for being so friendly, polite and welcoming when inspectors visited your school recently. What you told us, especially those of you who gave up your playtimes to talk to us, helped us when we were thinking about our findings. When your school was inspected last time, things were not quite right and it was given a 'notice to improve'. Everyone told us your school had improved and we agree. We found that your school is providing a satisfactory education.

Your behaviour is good, which helps you learn better, enjoy your time in school and feel safe. You try to come to school every day and so your attendance is better than in most schools. Well done! You make good progress in Saplings class and satisfactory progress in the rest of the school. Your work in English and mathematics has improved and although it could still be better, you now do as well as most pupils in other schools.

Your headteacher is doing the right things to move the school forward and is clear about what still needs improving. We agree that the school could be even better so we have made some points. You learn more in some classes than in others so we have asked the teachers to share their good ideas. We also asked them to plan lessons more carefully, thinking about what you know already and what the next steps are to challenge you all to do your best. Finally, we asked the teachers to give you plenty of opportunities to use your own ideas, do harder work (sometimes it is too easy!) and use your thinking skills a bit more. When the school leaders check up on how well things are going, we think they should look more carefully at how well you are all learning in lessons so they can help everyone, including the teachers, to improve. We have also asked the governors to get a clearer idea of how well the school is doing and work closely with the headteacher to set targets for improvement.

We could see that you all want the school to carry on improving, so well done so far and good luck for the next part of the Halstead story.

Yours sincerely

Sheena MacDonald

Her Majesty's Inspector

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