

# High Halstow Primary School

Harrison Drive, High Halstow, Rochester, ME3 8TF

**Inspection dates** 3–4 October 2012

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- The quality of teaching is inconsistent across the school, with pupils making uneven progress in Key Stage 2.
- Lessons are sometimes dominated by the teacher with too few checks made of pupils' understanding, resulting in a loss of learning.
- The role of middle leaders is not developed sufficiently for them to have a positive impact on the standards of pupils' work.
- The proportion of pupils making expected progress is lower than that found nationally, particularly in mathematics.

### The school has the following strengths

- The interim executive headteacher, acting head of school and governing body are deeply committed to raising pupils' achievement and are clear about how to achieve this.
- Pupils are happy. They are polite, behave well and look after each other in and around the school.
- The quality of teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 enables pupils to make good overall progress from their starting points.
- There is a strong community feeling that supports and nurtures all pupils. They feel safe and well cared for at all times.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 12 lessons taught by 10 teachers. Two of these lessons were joint observations with the acting head of school. In addition, the lead inspector conducted a tour of the school with the interim executive headteacher and the acting head of school to observe learning at the start of the inspection. Samples of work were analysed, including work from the previous year. The lead inspector listened to pupils reading from Year 2 and Year 6.
- Meetings were held with a group of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and a parent governor, senior and middle leaders and the Chair and Chief Executive of the Academy Trust with responsibility for the school.
- Inspectors took account of the 51 responses to the on-line parent questionnaire (Parent View), a letter from a parent and the 23 questionnaires completed by the staff in forming their judgements.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of other documents. These included self-evaluation records, the school's own records of pupils' current progress, minutes of the governing body minutes, and policies, procedures and records relating to behaviour, attendance, and safeguarding and performance management.

## Inspection team

Mary Erwin, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Bryan Meyer

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The number of pupils attending High Halstow has increased recently. It remains smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is below the national average.
- Most pupils who attend the school are of White British heritage, with very few who speak English as an additional language.
- The percentage of pupils supported by school action is below average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average. These pupils' needs relate to moderate learning difficulties.
- The proportion of pupils leaving or joining the school at other than normal times is above average.
- There is a pre-school nursery unit on the same site. As this is independently run, it did not form part of the inspection.
- The school meets the current government floor standards which set the minimum expectations for pupils' learning and progress.
- The school converted to academy status in April 2012. An Interim Executive headteacher was appointed in September 2012 to support the acting head of school, who was appointed at the same time.

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

- By July 2013, raise the quality of teaching in English and mathematics in Key Stage 2 and improve its impact on pupils' achievement by:
  - ensuring teachers improve their questioning techniques and use of time to improve the pace of pupils' learning
  - ensuring teachers make consistently good use of assessment information to plan lessons that consistently challenge all groups of pupils, especially the more able
  - sharing the good practice that exists both within the school and in the wider academy trust.
- Engage and enthuse Key Stage 2 pupils fully in their learning by:
  - ensuring pupils do not spend too long sitting and listening during whole-class introductions
  - providing more opportunities for pupils to initiate their own learning
  - reviewing the type of homework given and building stronger partnerships with parents to support this area of learning.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management, including governance, by:
  - developing the role of middle leaders so that they hold colleagues to account in their areas of responsibility, for the quality of teaching and pupils' learning
  - developing the role of the governing body to ensure it is able to challenge the school's leadership effectively and secure improved standards.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are broadly at the levels expected nationally for their age. They enjoy a rich range of activities and good teaching that enables them to make good progress.
- In Years 1 and 2, children continue to make good progress overall. Their progress is monitored and tracked effectively and teaching is matched appropriately to abilities. This enables children to leave Key Stage 1 with above average standards in reading and writing and with standards in mathematics that are broadly in line with the national average.
- By the end of Year 6, pupils' overall attainment over time is broadly average. English standards vary little over time and are consistently in line with the national average. Although standards in mathematics are less consistent than English year on year, over time they too are broadly average.
- The school's own latest data for 2012 indicate that the percentage of pupils achieving Level 4 or above in English remains consistent with previous years. However, as national standards in English have improved in 2012, this means that the school's English results are below average. The school's results for mathematics are weaker than English and have also moved from being in line with the national average to below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils attaining higher levels in mathematics is below the national average. This is because pupils are not given sufficient opportunities in some mathematics lessons to discuss their learning and the work is not always challenging enough. This inconsistency in the quality of teaching in mathematics as they pass through Key Stage 2 prevents pupils from making good or better progress.
- Pupils who have a statement of special educational needs, or who have been identified as needing extra support, make good progress overall. They achieve well because the support provided is set at the right level as it is for pupils eligible for extra support through additional pupil premium funding.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Children enjoy a variety of experiences both indoors and outdoors. There is an appropriate mixture of teaching and play that contributes to the children's good learning and progress.
- Teaching in Years 1 and 2 is consistently good. Pupils make good progress in developing their understanding of the links between letters and the sounds they make that begins in the Early Years Foundation Stage. This provides them with a solid foundation for developing their reading skills. Pupils take an active part in their learning and are enthusiastic about books and reading.
- Teaching is not consistently good in Key Stage 2. In the best lessons, the pace of learning is high and all groups of pupils make good progress. Where lessons require improvement, the challenge and pace of the teaching are not high enough to help pupils learn quickly enough, especially in mathematics.
- There was no inadequate or outstanding teaching seen during the inspection. Although, teachers are aware of what makes good or better teaching, lessons of this quality are not taught consistently across the school.
- Opportunities are missed to engage everyone actively in their learning. Pupils sometimes sit and listen for too long while one pupil answers. In the best lessons, pupils are given opportunities to play a full part by briefly discussing the question in pairs.
- Teachers' questioning skills are inconsistent. Not all teachers ask questions that develop pupils' thinking skills sufficiently. Many questions only need a simple response and the opportunity to develop a more thoughtful answer is missed.

- Teaching assistants are used effectively. They provide good support, both academic and emotional, for lower-attaining groups of pupils. As a result, these pupils make the same, or sometimes better, progress than others in the class.
- In the best lessons, tasks are appropriately demanding. In one lesson, a group of pupils were asked to use their prior knowledge of books and films to identify the type of fiction in a range of books chosen by the pupils. This gave rise to enthusiastic discussion and debate that resulted in a written comparison of the books that was of high quality.
- Written feedback in books is not consistently good. Some comments made are too general to help pupils know how to improve. There is evidence that pupils have opportunities to read and respond to the comments, although these are not consistently taken by all.
- Presentation is not consistently high in all books. There is a marked difference between the generally high levels of presentation seen in literacy books and written work that is produced in other subjects.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are good

- Pupils treat each other and adults with respect. They move sensibly around the school and arrive punctually for lessons. They are polite and courteous at all times.
- Pupils say that bullying is not a problem at the school. They feel confident that any reported incidents are treated seriously. Pupils spoken to say they could tell any adult in the school if there was a problem with bullying and it would be dealt with.
- Of the parents who responded to the on-line questionnaire, most state that their children feel safe at school. Pupils speak of feeling secure and safe both in school and on the playground. They have good relationships with all adults and feel well cared for.
- Attendance figures are higher than the national average. The school encourages full attendance by awarding a cup to the class with the best attendance figures each week. Pupils prize the cup highly.
- In lessons that are engaging, pupils' behaviour is good. Where the pace of the lesson slows significantly, pupils' interest wanes and fidgeting can set in. Pupils do not speak of behaviour that prevents them from learning.
- An effective buddy system is in place at playtimes. Older pupils have the responsibility of looking after the younger children, helping the very youngest to find their way from the dining room to the playground at lunchtimes.
- Behaviour in the playground is good. Pupils enjoy active playtimes and were seen playing cooperatively with one another during the inspection.
- Pupils are aware of how to stay safe when on the internet. They speak of lessons informing them of the possible dangers when online and recall the information and advice given to them.

### **The leadership and management** requires improvement

- The leadership team has been in place since September 2012. The interim executive headteacher has formed a strong working partnership with the acting head of school. They are resolute in their determination to improve standards and have developed clear and focused plans to achieve this.
- The trust in charge of the academy provides effective support. It is fully committed to raising achievement and has ensured that teachers receive high-quality professional development at all levels. The trust has appointed an interim executive headteacher who is a National Leader of Education and who provides support to the acting head that is of the highest calibre.
- Since September, the school has refined its system of tracking pupils' progress. It has identified pupils who need additional support to close gaps in their learning. The support has been in place for too short a period to be able to measure its success.

- The changes made by the newly-appointed leadership team have been recognised by parents. One grandmother commented that her grandchildren 'are happier this year than last year because they're doing more at school'.
  - The role of middle leaders in the school is under developed. Their actions have had limited impact in raising standards because monitoring systems have not been robust in the past. The leadership team has developed plans to support middle leaders and help them to carry out their roles effectively. There has been insufficient time for these plans to have an impact.
  - Teachers are aware of their latest performance management targets. These are clear, focused and measurable targets that are specific and relate to improved learning for individuals and groups of pupils. Teachers understand that they will be held accountable for expected improvements in learning by senior leaders and the governing body.
  - The curriculum is broad and balanced and is enriched by a range of activities, such as visits by theatre groups and outside speakers, art therapists, poets and historians in residence and extra music lessons. These sessions, along with opportunities to take part in sporting events and links with an African school, support the pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Senior leaders ensure that all pupils have equality of opportunity and that there is no discrimination.
  - All statutory requirements relating to safeguarding are effectively met..
  - **The governance of the school:**
    - The Chair of the Governing Body is being mentored by the Chair of the Academy Trust who is a National Leader of Governance. They have formed a professional partnership that is strengthening the governing body's role. Members of the governing body provide an increasing challenge to the leadership as their understanding of the school's provision and outcomes develops and their strategic role is strengthened. They are resolute in their commitment to raising aspirations and driving up standards. The governing body ensures effective use of additional funds provided by the pupil premium to overcome barriers in learning by providing support that is appropriately matched to the needs of individual pupils.
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## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	137990
<b>Local authority</b>	Medway
<b>Inspection number</b>	402783

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	200
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Graham Cottle
<b>Headteacher</b>	Alexander Clark
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	N/A
<b>Telephone number</b>	01634 251098
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