

Hesters Way Primary School

Dill Avenue, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, GL51 0ES

Inspection dates

6–7 November 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils achieve well because teaching is good. They have positive attitudes to learning and behave well.
- Pupils are polite and courteous. They are proud of their school. They feel safe and have a good understanding of how to keep safe.
- Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage where adults provide a broad range of interesting learning opportunities both inside and outdoors.
- Leaders and managers correctly identify the most important areas for improvement and have successfully improved the quality of teaching.
- Since the previous inspection attendance has improved and is now broadly in line with other schools nationally.
- Assessment systems in reading, writing and mathematics have been improved. Teachers use assessment information to plan suitable support for pupils. Additional adults provide effective assistance to pupils in small groups and through intervention programmes.
- Pupils with additional needs and those in receipt of additional government funding make similar progress to other pupils.
- Pastoral care is very strong. Parents are positive about the school. They are confident that the school is a good place for their children to learn.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Attainment and progress in mathematics are inconsistent. Work in books over time shows marking does not provide enough information for pupils for them to know how to improve their work. Gaps in pupils' understanding of mathematical vocabulary inhibit their learning.
- In a very small proportion of lessons teachers do not check on the progress pupils make and adjust tasks to more effectively meet pupils' individual learning needs.
- Planning across the curriculum does not always show how the development of pupils' more able pupils are not always challenged to make the best possible progress in lessons.

skills will be assessed.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching in all classes. They observed 17 lessons, taught by 10 teachers, of which two were observed jointly with the headteacher. A whole school assembly was observed. In addition, the inspectors carried out a learning walk to look at subjects other than English and mathematics, as well as a behaviour and safety learning walk.
- Meetings were held with pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and two other members of the governing body, the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the Early Years Foundation Stage teachers, the special educational needs coordinator, the English and mathematics subject leaders and a member of the pastoral support team. The lead inspector also had a meeting with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors observed the school's work, heard pupils read and scrutinised their work.
- Inspectors looked at a number of documents including strategic plans, safeguarding arrangements, planning and monitoring documentation, records relating to behaviour and attendance, minutes of the governing body's meetings, external monitoring reports, assessment data and curriculum plans.
- The views of parents were taken into account through informal discussions. One meeting was held with a parent following their request. There were no responses to the on-line Parent View survey.
- Staff views were taken into consideration through scrutiny of questionnaires completed by 17 staff members.

Inspection team

Ann Henderson, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Colin Lee

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized primary school with eight classes. Pupils are taught in single-age classes. There are two Reception classes. There is one class for each year group in Years 1 to 6.
- There is a breakfast club which is managed by the governing body.
- The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage, the proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is below average as is the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language or at the early stages of speaking English when they join the school.
- The proportions of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, including pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs, are above average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium funding, which in this school provides additional government funding for pupils in local authority care and those known to be eligible for free school meals, is well above the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set out the minimum expectations of pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve progress and raise attainment in mathematics by:
 - securing pupils' understanding of mathematical vocabulary
 - improving the quality of marking and feedback to pupils.
- Raise expectations still further to accelerate the progress of more able pupils by providing appropriately challenging activities in all subjects.
- Ensure planning identifies how learning is to be assessed across all areas of the curriculum to secure the systematic and progressive development of pupils' skills.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Pupils enjoy their time in school. Their progress is improving. They say lessons are enjoyable. Pupils apply themselves well to learning in lessons and display positive attitudes. Relationships are good.
- Children enter the Reception classes with skills and abilities that are below those expected for their age. They make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage because adults provide an interesting and exciting range of activities for them to explore.
- Attainment by the end of Key Stage 2 has been rising. Results in English in 2012 were the highest they have ever been and pupils' attainment was above the national average.
- Attainment in mathematics has also improved over recent years, although in 2012 there was a dip in pupils' achievement. The school is aware of this issue and has already put plans in place to improve pupils' calculation skills.
- The school has a good system in place to involve pupils in checking their own learning. The 'passports for learning' enable pupils to know their next steps and aim for improvements. These are well established in writing. Pupils are enthusiastic about their passports and use them well, making a positive contribution to their improved progress. 'Passports for learning' have recently been introduced in mathematics to enable pupils to monitor their progress in mathematics more carefully.
- Attainment in reading is stronger than in writing. Pupils are enthusiastic about reading and during discussions pupils were able to talk with interest and understanding about the books they have read and the authors whose books they most enjoy reading.
- The programme for phonics (the sounds letters make) is now taught more systematically which is supporting younger pupils well. Older pupils who did not receive such a structured programme sometimes struggle to decode unfamiliar words. Nevertheless, the school is supporting older pupils well by regularly hearing individual pupils read and encouraging a love of reading through the regular use of the school library.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, and those in receipt of additional government funding, make good progress because of the intervention programmes suited to their learning needs and because the teaching assistants support their learning well in lessons. The school has a very strong commitment to ensuring all pupils have equal access to learning. Any form of discrimination is tackled rigorously.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching has improved since the last inspection, particularly in the way teachers use assessment information to develop pupils' next steps in learning. Pupils show a good understanding of what they need to do to improve their work.
- Teachers mark pupils' work in writing well. Their comments provide pupils with information on what they have done well and what they now need to do to improve further. At present the marking of work in mathematics is less helpful to pupils.
- Relationships between adults and pupils are good and support learning well. There is a positive climate for learning. Classrooms are bright and well organised with designated areas for learning. Attractive and welcoming reading areas with a range of interesting reading materials encourage pupils to develop a love of reading. Pupils' work and prompts to support learning are displayed effectively.
- Although the teaching of mathematics observed during the inspection was mainly of a good quality, there are gaps in pupils' prior knowledge, particularly the understanding of some mathematical vocabulary. In some lessons, this hinders pupils' ability to be successful in their learning.

- Overall, lessons are tailored well to meet pupils' learning needs. However, in some cases the expectations of higher-ability pupils are not high enough. They are not always provided with sufficient challenge to accelerate their progress.
- Well-targeted and successful intervention programmes support pupils with disabilities, special educational needs and those at risk of falling behind. As a result, their progress is similar to their peers and they are not disadvantaged.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage settle quickly because procedures to support them before they begin in the Reception classes are good. A good range of stimulating activities both indoors and outside engage children well in their learning. The learning environment encourages exploration and supports their developing self-confidence well.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Parents are confident that the staff at Hesters Way Primary look after their children well. There is a high degree of trust from parents. The parents and family members spoken to during the inspection expressed very positive views, particularly in relation to the pastoral support the school provides.
- Pupils told the inspectors that behaviour around the school is typically good. As a result of good quality training for all staff, and a consistently applied behaviour policy which is understood by all, the use of sanctions is rare and exclusions have reduced. Behaviour was consistently good throughout the inspection, including for those pupils who find it more difficult to behave well.
- Pupils say they feel very safe in school. They have a good understanding of managing risks and know how to keep safe when using the internet and mobile technologies.
- The curriculum effectively supports pupils' understanding of bullying. The pupils are confident in their understanding of different forms of bullying, including racist and prejudice-based bullying. Bullying is rare but, if it does occur, it is dealt with effectively and quickly.
- Pupils know that good attendance is important. Their rates of attendance have improved, although a small proportion of pupils do not attend regularly enough. Most pupils arrive in time for the start of the school day and lessons are not interrupted.
- Pupils play well together during playtimes and lunchtimes. Their respect for lunchtime support staff is evident through their good relationships and positive attitudes. Lunchtime routines are well established and pupils experience a calm, orderly environment in which to enjoy their lunch.

The leadership and management are good

- Senior leaders share the same desire to improve outcomes and provide the best quality care for all pupils. They have correctly identified the most important areas for improvement. Regular checks on the quality of teaching have resulted in a consistently good quality of teaching overall.
- The headteacher is well respected by pupils, parents and staff. Morale is high and there is a determination by all staff to continue the school's journey towards further improvement.
- New systems for the performance management of staff are in place and support staff are included in the procedures which focus on improving pupils' progress and developing staff skills.
- Training and development opportunities have been planned well, linked to the schools' priorities. As a result, there is a consistency of approach to behaviour management and classroom practice.
- The curriculum is suitably broad and balanced and focuses on developing pupils' skills in different subjects. This is clearly evident through a wide range of interesting and stimulating displays across the school. However, the approach to checking on the progression of skills as pupils move from year to year is underdeveloped. The inclusive approach to the curriculum encourages pupils to take part in a range of musical and sporting activities which make a good contribution to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The school has developed very productive partnerships to support learning and the pastoral care

of pupils. The effective partnership with the on-site children's centre has resulted in children settling quickly in the Reception classes and making good progress.

- Partnerships to support the pastoral care of pupils and their families are very strong and the pastoral support team is instrumental in ensuring those pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable are not disadvantaged. By nurturing and monitoring their achievements and social development carefully, staff ensure equality of opportunity for all pupils.
- Safeguarding and child protection procedures meet requirements. Staff are suitably trained and all training for staff is up to date.
- The local authority has offered reduced support to this school during the past year. Some support has been provided to improve assessment in science and to develop the skills of middle leaders.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Members of the governing body know the school well and are committed to improving the quality of education for all pupils. They have a clear overview of the school's systems for managing staff performance. They make regular visits to the school to check on the progress of planned actions and regularly report their findings to the full governing body. Governors have a good understanding of ensuring effective financial managements, but do not always check on the impact of specific spending priorities, such as how successful the strategies have been to improve the educational chances for pupils in receipt of additional government funding. Their understanding of pupils' attainment and progress is developing through additional training provided by the headteacher and through sharing expertise with member of the governing bodies of partner schools.

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

Unique reference number	131250
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	402457

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	194
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Geoff Buckeridge
Headteacher	Graeme Davidson
Date of previous school inspection	23–24 November 2009
Telephone number	01242 525616
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