

# High Halden Church of England Primary School

Church Hill, Ashford, Kent, TN26 3JB

**Inspection dates** 16–17 January 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
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 make consistently good progress in English and mathematics, many from very low starting points when they join the school.
- Teaching is consistently good and planning for the mixed-age classes and the range of different abilities within them is very effective in meeting the needs of all the pupils.
- Leaders are passionate that no pupil in the school will fail. They have excellent systems to check on how pupils are doing so that any who are falling behind are quickly helped to catch up.
- The school fosters extremely good relationships with its parent community, especially those from Gypsy/Roma and Traveller backgrounds, building highly supportive and trusting relationships.
- Pupils' behaviour, both in class and around the school, is good. They feel safe and enjoy coming to school.
- Governors are effective in checking how the school is doing, challenging it to do better and in planning for the future.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils do not make outstanding progress in enough lessons. They do not write enough at length for different purposes or tackle problems in mathematics that will allow them to apply their skills.
- The outside area for Reception does not give children enough chance to find things out for themselves.

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## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed 10 lessons, of which five were joint observations with senior leaders. In addition, he made a number of other short visits to lessons and observed an assembly. He also looked at pupils' books and observed other aspects of the school's work.
- Meetings were held with the Vice-chair and Chair of the Governing Body and school staff. Year 4 pupils were interviewed about their learning and well-being. The head boy and the head girl gave the inspector a tour of the school and he also spoke to pupils about their reading and listened to them read. A meeting was held with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector took account of the 29 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), and spoke to parents at the 'Nine O'Clock Club'. He also reviewed 15 questionnaire responses from staff.
- A number of documents were looked at, including the school's own data relating to pupils' achievement in the school year 2011/12 and since September 2012, the school's self-evaluation summary and school development plan, planning and monitoring documentation including external reviews commissioned by the school, records relating to behaviour and attendance, policy documents and documents relating to safeguarding.

## Inspection team

Martin Marsh, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- The number of pupils who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional government funding for specific groups) is lower than average but rising.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is broadly average, as is the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- One in six pupils are from Gypsy/Roma or Traveller communities. There are a small number of pupils from other minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is broadly average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- Since the last inspection the governing body has changed significantly with a new Chair and many new governor appointments.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching so that pupils make outstanding progress in a higher proportion of lessons by:
  - giving pupils regular opportunities to practise their writing for longer periods of time for a range of different purposes
  - offering more frequent opportunities for pupils to solve challenging problems and apply their skills in mathematics lessons.
- Develop the outside learning area for Reception so that there are more opportunities for children to learn without adult support.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Children join the school in Reception, Year 1 and other year groups. Their experiences of learning are varied with some unable to speak English and some with very low ability. Regardless of their starting points, pupils make good progress. Good and improving teaching and effective systems to check on progress enable all pupils to learn well and get help if they need it.
- Standards in English and mathematics when pupils leave the school are broadly in line with those nationally. Progress is consistently good in all year groups in the school. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, and pupils at an early stage of learning English, receive good support in class and in small groups out of class. This, combined with excellent use of external expertise, helps these pupils to participate fully in lessons and make similarly good progress.
- Good teaching of letters and the sounds they make means children make a good start in learning to read in Reception. Pupils build their skills well and develop a growing enjoyment and confidence with reading as they move through the school. Pupils' grammar, punctuation and spelling are secure and they are confident in doing written and mental calculations.
- Pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding receive individual support and tuition. As a result, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals make good and often rapid progress and average point scores show they catch up with their peers, achieving in line with all pupils nationally by the time they leave the school.
- The school engages well with Gypsy/Roma or Traveller families and as a result they attend school regularly, make good progress and are well prepared for the next stage in their education.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Excellent relationships between adults and pupils, and among the pupils themselves, are typical of all lessons. As a result, pupils listen to their teachers and learn well from each other when they are asked to work in a group or in pairs.
- Teachers know their pupils extremely well and put a lot of work into planning lessons for mixed-age and ability classes so that all pupils do work which is set at the right level. This, together with excellent support from other adults, makes sure that pupils make good and sometimes even better progress in lessons.
- Pupils are told how much time they have to complete a task and what it means to be successful which pupils often use to assess their own progress. Marking is consistently good, showing pupils what they are doing well and what they need to do to improve. Pupils value the comments on their work and respond regularly to what their teacher has written.
- Teachers check on learning throughout the lesson, adapting what they are doing when a misunderstanding or difficulty occurs. When the school identifies a group of pupils that is not achieving it changes how they are taught. An example of this was a special grammar lesson for a group of boys in Years 5 and 6 which was highly focused on improving the quality of their sentences using semi-colons, and resulted in the boys making rapid progress with their writing.
- Although pupils' writing skills are secure, they are not given enough opportunity to apply them in different ways or to write for sustained periods of time. Pupils also do not spend enough time applying their calculation and other mathematical skills in solving a wider range of problems and in mathematical investigations.
- In Reception, children find learning enjoyable, particularly in lessons where they are learning the sounds that letters make. However, the outdoors is not sufficiently interesting for children to learn as well as they could independently of adult guidance and support.

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

- 'I wake up and say, "Yes! It's school!".' One Year 4 pupil's view of how much she enjoys coming to school is typical of how many of the pupils feel. Pupils trust their teachers to look after them and help them to learn well.
- Pupils are polite and welcoming and keen to show their work and discuss what they do in school. They talked enthusiastically about what they had learnt about Gipsy/Roma and Traveller culture when they explored a traditional horse-drawn caravan and about what they did when an 'alien space ship' landed in the playground. They love 'Reading to the Dog' where they read to an adult with a pet dog present.
- Around the school and in lessons pupils' behaviour is typically good. Teachers treat the pupils with great care and respect and expect the best from them. In some lessons there are a few pupils who find it difficult to concentrate for long periods when listening to the teacher or when they are working on their own.
- Year 6 pupils were proud of being 'peer supporters', a role in which they help pupils who may not have friends in the playground or may be unhappy for some reason. They also valued being part of the school council or being a 'young leader', helping to set up games for younger pupils.
- There are pupils who find school difficult and misbehave but the school manages this very well and is successful in settling them into school and helping them to learn while not affecting the learning and well-being of other pupils.
- Bullying is rare and dealt with quickly when it happens. Pupils understand about different forms of bullying including cyber bullying. They have excellent social skills and well-developed understanding of right and wrong, which enable them to respect each other's differences. This shows that the school is successful in promoting equality of opportunity and fairness, fostering good relationships and tackling discrimination.
- Attendance is broadly average. The school has been very successful in working with families whose children, in the past, have often been absent or late and making sure they now come to school regularly and on time.

**The leadership and management are good**

- The headteacher has developed a team that wholly share her drive, passion and determination that no child should be allowed to fail. Staff and governors work as a very cohesive team aiming to provide the very best for all the pupils. Staff morale is high.
- Parents are fully behind the school and trust the school to keep their children safe, make sure they behave well and help them to learn. The school has been highly successful in reaching out to its parent community, especially to Gipsy/Roma and Traveller families and welcomed a representative of that community onto the school's governing body.
- Performance information is used effectively to check on how well pupils are doing and is used to hold teachers to account and goes towards the school's judgement on the quality of teaching. There are regular reviews of teachers' performance to check if they are meeting targets to improve. The staff value the importance the school places on training to enable them to improve both their teaching and leadership skills. As a result, the quality of teaching, and pupils' progress are both improving.
- The local authority's support in giving the school an external view as to how well it is doing is good. This, together with the school's own systems for checking its quality, enables leaders to make plans for the future which are accurate and well informed.
- Pupils have opportunities for developing their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness through links with the local church, visits to older residents, specialist teaching for physical education, partnership with a town school in Bexley, visitors to school and day and residential

trips. There is also a wide range of clubs available after school which are well attended.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governors have an excellent understanding of performance information and how the school compares with other schools. They ask searching questions about the school's work and have a key role in making plans for its future development. Financial management is very effective and governors know how the pupil premium funding is being spent and the difference this is making for pupils and how teachers' performance is related to their pay. Different aspects of the school's plans are routinely checked by nominated governors who report back to the full governing body on their findings. This includes checking on the quality of teaching about which they have an accurate understanding. They understand the need for training and are accessing the local authority's training packages for governor development. The governing body is rigorous in meeting its safeguarding responsibilities, particularly regarding the safety of pupils and the appointment of staff.
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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>

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## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	118666
<b>Local authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	405804

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>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	107
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Edward Conba
<b>Headteacher</b>	Lindsay Roberts
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	14–15 October 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01233 850285
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