

# Hillcroft Primary School

Chaldon Road, Caterham, Surrey, CR3 5PG

**Inspection dates** 23–24 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.

- Strong leadership by the headteacher and governors has brought about rapid and consistent improvements to the school's performance since the previous inspection.
- Pupils work hard and they achieve well personally and academically. They make good progress from below average starting points. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics have improved and are now average.
- Teaching has improved significantly since the previous inspection and is consistently good across the school, with a small but increasing proportion that is outstanding.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They feel safe in school because they know that adults will respond to any concerns they raise. Pupils are proud of their school.
- Equal opportunities are promoted well. There are few differences in achievement between different groups of pupils. Pupils get on well together, regardless of background.
- School leaders and governors have an accurate view of the school's strengths and what needs to be further improved. They have successfully addressed the issues from the previous inspection and have capacity to improve further.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- Most teaching is good rather than outstanding. This is because there are too few opportunities for pupils to learn independently or to use their literacy and mathematical skills when learning other subjects.
- There is no long-term strategic plan in place to show how the school is to develop over the next few years.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 23 lessons or parts of lessons, including several that were observed jointly with senior leaders. They looked at work in pupils' books and listened to them read.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, governors and pupils. A discussion was held by telephone with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at a number of documents including school development plans, pupils' assessment and tracking information, school self-evaluation and arrangements for safeguarding pupils.
- The views of parents and carers were considered through informal discussion with parents and carers at the start of the school day, scrutiny of the 63 responses to the online Parent View survey and the outcomes of the school's own recent parental questionnaires.

## Inspection team

Joy Considine, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Victor Chaffey

Additional inspector

Ann Longfield

Additional inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils who are from minority ethnic backgrounds is broadly average although the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is lower than usual.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium initiative, which is extra funding provided to support those eligible for free school meals, children in local authority care and children from service families, is average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is broadly average. The proportion of pupils who are supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also broadly average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set out the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school has gone through a period of change and the headteacher and a number of staff have been appointed since the previous full inspection. In September 2012, the school became a two-form entry primary school owing to an increase in pupil numbers.
- There is provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage in the Nursery and Reception Classes. The school uses the The Den, which is a nurture group based at a nearby primary school to support a small number of pupils who find some aspects of school difficult to manage from time to time.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching so that a higher proportion is outstanding by:
  - providing pupils with more opportunities to learn and record their work independently
  - making better use of good quality books and visual images to support pupils' learning and understanding
  - providing more opportunities for pupils to write independently and develop their mathematical skills when learning other subjects.
- Improve strategic planning by:
  - creating a long-term plan showing how the school is to develop over the next three years.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics has improved and by the end of Year 6 their attainment in English and mathematics is broadly average.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress from their starting points owing to the good support they receive from skilled teaching assistants. Pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding make good progress and achieve average points scores (awarded for test results) that are at least in line with national expectations and those of their classmates.
- Children start school with skills that are below the levels expected for their age and they make good progress in all aspects of their development. In Reception, they use letters and sounds to read and write simple words and phrases and they accurately count to 10 and beyond. They get on well together and share and take turns when playing and working together.
- School leaders have put into place actions to improve pupils' reading and these are paying dividends as pupils improve their skills. New systems to teach letters and sounds (phonics) help pupils to read and write unfamiliar words. By the end of Year 2, pupils read confidently demonstrating a wide range of skills. By the end of Year 6, they select books which they read fluently and widely for pleasure and to find information.
- Pupils make good progress in writing because teachers provide them with information about how their work can be improved. Handwriting is legible and spelling and punctuation are mostly accurate. Scrutiny of pupils' work shows that although there are plenty of opportunities in literacy lessons for pupils to write imaginatively, there are not always enough occasions where they practise their writing when learning other subjects. In a few classes, teachers give pupils too much structured support and this slows their progress to write independently.
- Pupils enjoy mathematics because lessons are usually brisk and challenging and inspire pupils to work hard. In a Year 5 mathematics lesson, pupils were converting fractions to decimals with opportunities for more-able pupils to move on to percentages. Although some struggled with the very small numbers involved, good questioning by the teacher identified and addressed their confusion which then allowed them to make good progress in their understanding.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is consistently good across the school. Pupils enjoy their lessons which are typically lively and engaging, and this fosters good relationships between staff and pupils. Pupils extend their learning through good quality discussion which is a feature of most lessons seen.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage successfully promotes children's learning and development. Staff carefully observe children and use this information to plan learning experiences that meet the developmental needs of children. High-quality questions support and extend children's understanding and thinking skills.
- New systems to record and track pupils' progress enable staff to identify those pupils who are at risk of falling behind. Consequently, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress because they are provided with intervention activities, often led by skilled teaching assistants. Those pupils eligible for pupil premium funding make good progress because staff provide additional support to help them to learn as well as other pupils.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and high expectations. They ask focused questions to challenge pupils and to extend their learning. During lessons, they check pupils' understanding and adjust their lessons accordingly to address pupils' misconceptions. Consequently pupils of all abilities, including those from minority ethnic groups, make good progress.
- Most lessons are well planned with clear learning intentions so that pupils understand what they are expected to learn. Teachers use assessment effectively to plan lessons that meet the needs

and interests of all pupils. Most teachers are skilled at demonstrating and explaining what they want pupils to learn but they do not make enough use of visual resources and high-quality books to stimulate pupils' interest and imagination. Therefore, opportunities to reinforce pupils' learning are occasionally missed.

- Marking is accurate and provides good guidance to pupils on how to improve their work. Pupils know their targets, which link to lesson objectives. Targets are carefully monitored and allow pupils to understand the progress they make. However, there are not enough occasions where pupils learn independently through research and by making choices about how they record their work.

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

- Pupils' enjoy school. They behave well in lessons and around the school. They are polite, friendly and helpful towards each other and to adults. Pupils get on well together regardless of background, reflecting strong racial harmony. They enjoy lessons and say that they are rarely disrupted by poor behaviour. Very occasionally when the pace of lessons slows, a few pupils become fidgety and start to chat among themselves.
- Pupils feel safe in school. They have a good understanding of different forms of bullying including cyber-bullying and name-calling but they say that bullying is rare. Records kept by the school show a marked reduction in reported incidents related to behaviour and the rate of exclusions has fallen. This is partly due to the partnerships the school has with outside agencies, including the The Den which helps vulnerable youngsters to manage their behaviour and achieve well.
- Most parents and carers who expressed a view feel that behaviour is typically good and that their children are safe. Attendance has improved and is now broadly average. This is a result of concerted effort by the school and external agencies to work with parents and carers to improve attendance.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe outside school. They understand how to manage risks associated with substance and tobacco abuse and are aware of dangers posed by traffic.
- The school council plays an active role in the school. It helps to improve pupils' experiences in school and it is instrumental in fund raising for charities such as School in a Bag which provides stationery and equipment for schools in countries in the developing world. In their role as playground buddies, older pupils support younger pupils by playing games and helping them to find new friends. Activities such as these promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.

### **The leadership and management** are good

- School leaders have high expectations and have relentlessly focused on raising achievement by improving the quality of teaching. Leaders have created a strong team of staff who are ambitious and ensure that all pupils achieve well, regardless of background. Equal opportunities underpin all aspects of the school's work and discrimination on any grounds is not tolerated.
- Senior leaders check teachers' work regularly. They provide support and guidance to help teachers to improve their skills and this has led to marked improvements in the quality of teaching. Good systems for performance management have addressed previously weaker teaching and strengthened teachers' skills. Targets set for teachers are linked to pupils' achievement and links between performance and salary progression are clear.

- Systems for self-evaluation are thorough and plans for improvement are focused on areas the school needs to address. School leaders ensure that policies are consistently put into place by all staff and this has led to pupils achieving well in English and mathematics.
- The broad, balanced curriculum meets the needs of pupils' aptitudes and interests and promotes their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. The strong focus on literacy and numeracy allows pupils to develop their basic skills in preparation for their next stage of education. Planning in subjects other than English and mathematics does not consistently build in opportunities for pupils to write at length or to practise and extend their mathematical skills.
- Leaders make good use of resources including the pupil premium funding. This allows targeted pupils to access curriculum enrichment activities so they achieve as well as other pupils. The new library has successfully developed pupils' love of reading. One pupil said, 'A book is where you get lost in the pages.'
- The school has responded very well to the good support the local authority has provided to help it strengthen teaching and raise achievement.

■ **The governance of the school:**

As a result of training and development, governors have a good knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They have successfully focused on improving the school since the previous inspection. However, there are no current plans in place to show how the school is to develop in the longer term. They know how well the school is doing in comparison with schools nationally and they use this information to challenge school leaders. They talk confidently and accurately about the quality of teaching and understand the link between performance management and salary progression for staff. Governors have a good understanding of how the pupil premium funding is spent and how it improves the progress of this group. Safeguarding is given high priority by governors who ensure that the school complies with all requirements.

## 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>	125123
<b>Local authority</b>	Surrey
<b>Inspection number</b>	402318

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>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	374
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Chris Botten
<b>Headteacher</b>	Stephanie Scutter
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	14 October 2009
<b>Telephone number</b>	01883 342606
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