

Little Horsted Church of England Primary School

Little Horsted, Uckfield, East Sussex, TN22 5YS

Inspection dates 13–14 February 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Pupils make good progress from their starting points and achieve well in a range of subjects, especially in reading and writing.
- Teaching is good, and some of it is outstanding, particularly in English.
- Pupils behave extremely well in lessons and around the school. They have no concerns about bullying. The school has been extremely successful in improving the behaviour of the very small number of pupils for whom conforming to its expectations has proved difficult.
- Leaders are firmly committed to ensuring that pupils receive the best quality education and care, and have improved the quality of teaching, most notably in mathematics.
- The school's highly positive ethos and rich curriculum underpin its very successful promotion of all aspects of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Governors know their school very well and make a strong contribution to its continuing improvement.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Achievement is not outstanding because leaders have not yet eliminated all instances of weaker teaching, such as teachers not always making the best use of time in lessons.
- Teachers do not all give pupils enough opportunities to reflect on the quality of their work and to respond to teachers' comments.
- Parents are not consistently given enough information and advice about how they can support and extend their children's learning at home.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed seven lessons, four of them together with the headteacher, visiting all the classes in the school and observing all the teachers present at least once. He also listened to pupils read, made shorter visits to a number of other lessons, and attended two assemblies.
- The inspector held discussions with a group of pupils from Years 1 to 6, individual pupils, the Chair and Vice Chair of the Governing Body, members of staff and several parents, and spoke by telephone with two representatives of the local authority.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school's own information on pupils' attainment and progress, safeguarding procedures, records of the school's own lesson observations, and self-evaluation and planning documents.
- In planning and carrying out the inspection, the inspector took account of the 25 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) submitted before and during the inspection, three letters received from parents, and 15 questionnaires completed by members of the teaching and support staff.

Inspection team

Robin Gaff, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a much smaller than average primary school.
- A very large majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- Approximately 10% of pupils are supported through school action, and about 9% are supported at school action plus or have a statement of special educational needs. These proportions are broadly in line with national averages.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for pupil premium support (additional money allocated to schools by the government) is well below the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- In recent years, the school has undertaken a major rebuilding programme, which was completed in May 2012.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Enable more pupils to make outstanding progress from their starting points by ensuring that:
 - all teaching throughout the school is never less than good, by making sure, for example, that teachers always make the best use of available time in lessons.
 - teachers give pupils more opportunities to respond to the comments they have made on pupils' work
 - parents receive more detailed information and advice on how to help their children to build on what they have learned at school.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children join the school with skills and abilities which vary considerably from year to year, but which overall are broadly in line with those expected for their age.
- By the time they leave the school, their attainment, as represented by their performance in national tests, is consistently above average. This represents good achievement.
- Leaders have successfully addressed the causes of the dip in results which occurred in 2011. In particular, they have ensured that pupils are achieving well in mathematics, as well as in reading and writing.
- Children settle in very quickly in the Reception class. They rapidly develop good social skills as they learn to work and play together and on their own. They are keen to explore and make the most of the rich environment, both indoors and outdoors, and the imaginative resources which the school provides for them. For example, they thoroughly enjoyed making lunar landscapes from flour and 'moon rocks', learning a great deal about the properties of the materials they were using.
- Standards in both reading and writing have been consistently above average throughout the school. Pupils of all ages read confidently, accurately and fluently, and are very keen to talk about the wide variety of books they enjoy reading.
- The school has put in place a number of successful strategies to improve the quality of pupils' writing, especially for boys, for example by providing them with topics which relate better to their interests. As a result, the standard of writing in Years 5 and 6 is now high. In one lesson, for example, pupils created highly imaginative and telling images in their poems inspired by different animals.
- In mathematics, pupils gain a good understanding of mathematical principles and techniques, because teachers give them good opportunities to apply them to solving problems in real-life situations.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress because of the high quality support they receive from teachers and other adults, and because teachers adapt activities skilfully to meet their needs.
- The levels of attainment reached in 2012 by the very small number of pupils who were eligible for the additional pupil premium funding were broadly in line with those of others in the school and pupils nationally. The school is using the extra money to good effect, for example by providing additional small group support, so that eligible pupils make good progress.
- Pupils develop good skills and enjoy their learning in a wide range of subjects, including music, information and communication technology (ICT), and physical education. Older boys and girls demonstrated a great deal of enthusiasm and considerable skill in their performances of traditional Maori Haka.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers have high expectations of their pupils and create a calm, orderly and purposeful atmosphere in classrooms. They are knowledgeable about the different subjects they teach and successfully share their enthusiasm for them.
- Teachers give pupils a good range of tasks, which they explain clearly and adapt carefully to match the different ages and ability levels within their classes. Through their skilful use of teaching assistants, they make sure that all pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, are fully included in activities.
- Teachers and teaching assistants ensure that pupils gain a secure understanding of phonics (the links between letters and sounds), which enables them to make at least good, and often outstanding, progress in reading and writing.

- The teaching of mathematics has improved significantly, resulting in good achievement, because teachers focus very clearly and successfully on ensuring that pupils know thoroughly and understand the basic techniques they need to investigate and solve problems. This was very much apparent in a lesson in which Year 6 pupils made excellent progress in learning how to measure the dimensions and area of increasingly complex shapes.
- In the rare examples of less successful teaching, teachers do not always ensure that time is used to the best effect, or that pupils understand clearly what they are meant to learn and not just what teachers want them to do.
- Teachers check pupils' understanding thoroughly throughout lessons, and adapt activities if they discover that progress has been faster or slower progress than they had anticipated. They make good use of questioning to extend pupils' learning and also enable pupils to benefit from assessing their own and each other's work.
- Teachers mark pupils' work thoroughly and accurately, insisting on correct spelling and emphasising the need for good presentation. They give pupils helpful written comments, so that they know their targets and what they need to do to reach them. Teachers do not consistently ensure that pupils have opportunities to extend their learning still further by reflecting on their work and responding to these comments.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils are very proud of their school and show highly positive attitudes in lessons.
- Their excellent social development is demonstrated by the way in which they work extremely well together in group and paired activities, and are attentive to their teachers and to each other's contributions.
- Pupils play very safely and harmoniously together during break times. They understand and fully support the school's 'golden rules', which they helped to devise. They are exceptionally polite, welcoming and helpful to visitors.
- Many pupils comment, as do their parents, on how they go out of their way to help and support others, especially disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. They have a very well developed understanding of right and wrong and of the importance of fair play.
- Pupils have no concerns about bullying. They do, though, have a very clear understanding of different types of bullying, such as those based on prejudice or associated with misuse of mobile phones and the internet.
- The school has been extremely successful in improving the behaviour of the very small number of pupils whose additional needs make it hard for them to live up to its expectations. Staff provide these pupils with a highly consistent approach which gives them a strong sense of security. This enables them, as well as other pupils, to benefit fully from classroom and other activities.
- Attendance has been consistently well above average and there have been no exclusions for many years.
- Parents and carers were unanimous in confirming that their children are safe in school.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher works very effectively with the deputy and other members of staff, who all share his vision and their mission, 'Working as a team to achieve the best for each child in a caring Christian environment'.
- School leaders, working closely with the governing body, have rigorously and accurately assessed the school's performance, and set challenging but realistic targets for further improvement.
- The headteacher and his deputy continually monitor pupils' progress and their classroom

experience, and have acted firmly to improve the quality of teaching. They give teachers robust and supportive feedback which, together with the good opportunities they have to attend relevant courses and to share examples of outstanding practice they have developed, enables them to teach even better lessons.

- Teachers have personal targets linked explicitly to pupils' achievement and to the school's development priorities. Salary increases and promotions depend upon their success in achieving these objectives.
 - The curriculum is very well matched to the needs and interests of pupils of different ages and abilities, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. Pupils speak enthusiastically of the way in which topic-related work makes learning come to life, for example when they took part, in costume, in a Tudor feast.
 - The school provides a very wide range of after-school clubs, visits, and special events, some of which are led by visiting speakers, including representatives of different faiths. All pupils have the opportunity to learn to play musical instruments. Pupils have helped to create the impressive range of displays of art work around the school, some of which commemorate the school's history and its place in the local community. Pupils also participate successfully in many sporting competitions. All these factors contribute to the school's extremely effective promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
 - The school makes good use of pupil premium money to enable eligible pupils to participate fully in after-school and enrichment activities. This, together with the good achievement of all groups within the school, demonstrates its successful commitment to ensuring equality of opportunity and to tackling any form of discrimination.
 - The local authority has provided good support, for example in training staff and governors, but rightly recognises that the school has the capacity to succeed without direct intervention on its part.
 - Parents and carers are extremely supportive of the school, commending in particular the high level of care which it gives their children. A few, however, expressed concerns about the effectiveness of homework in reinforcing their children's learning. Leaders recognise the need to give parents more information and guidance about how they can help to extend and enhance their children's learning and progress at home.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body includes a good range of expertise, including education, health and safety, and finance, and members update their knowledge and skills by undertaking regular training. They show an acute understanding of the school's performance compared with that of other similar schools, and of the quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' achievement. Governors know how pupil premium funding is being used to give eligible pupils' additional opportunities and to raise their achievement. They understand clearly how leaders check teachers' performance, and hold the headteacher robustly to account for improving teaching, and for ensuring that pay increases are justified by successful practice. The governing body makes sure that the school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements, and that it makes the best use of available resources. It has closely overseen the ambitious building programme completed by the school, which has made a significant contribution to improving the facilities, including information and communication technology, from which pupils now benefit.
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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

Unique reference number	114557
Local authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	403243

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	112
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Helen Valentine
Headteacher	Michael Davies
Date of previous school inspection	4 June 2008
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Fax number	01825 750380
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