

West Hill Primary School

Dartford Road, Dartford, Kent, DA1 3DZ

Inspection dates 5–6 March 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		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils achieve well as most make good progress from their starting points. Pupils' attainment in English and mathematics has improved since the previous inspection and is now high.
- Teaching across the school is typically good. The effective teaching of phonics (the linking of sounds and letters) has led to pupils becoming confident, competent readers.
- Marking is of a high standard. Teachers provide exceptionally detailed comments on pupils' work and identify clearly what pupils need to do to improve.
- Pupils' behaviour is typically good and around the school it is often exemplary. Pupils say they feel very safe in the school.
- The acting headteacher and the acting deputy headteacher have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and of the areas which need further improvement. They have high expectations of all who work in the school and staff are fully supportive of their leadership.
- Governors provide a good balance of challenge and support to school leaders and have a comprehensive knowledge of the school's work and the quality of teaching and learning.
- The school provides a wealth of opportunities to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. These values underpin the curriculum and are at the core of the school's ethos.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough teaching is outstanding. Teachers' explanations and introductions to lessons are sometimes too long which means pupils then do not have sufficient time to work independently.
- Some pupils, who find learning more difficult, rely too much on adult support and are not confident to work on their own.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children do not have enough opportunities to develop their early literacy and numeracy skills outdoors.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 19 lessons or part lessons, of which two were seen together with senior leaders. Inspectors also carried out a number of short visits to lessons to observe the teaching and learning of phonics (the linking of sounds and letters).
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body, the school's middle and senior leaders and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors observed playtime and lunchtime routines and visited two assemblies. They looked at a range of documentation. This included records of checks on the quality of teaching, the school improvement plan, minutes of governing body meetings, records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding and the tracking of pupils' progress. They also looked closely at pupils' written work and listened to pupils reading, particularly in Years 1 to 3.
- Inspectors took account of 36 responses to Parent View (the on-line questionnaire) and met with parents on the playground at the end of the day. The responses to 39 questionnaires completed by staff were also taken into account.

Inspection team

Sue Quirk, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Neil Gillespie

Additional Inspector

Carol Vant

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The long serving headteacher retired at the end of the summer term 2012 and the deputy headteacher is currently acting headteacher. There is also an acting deputy headteacher.
- About three quarters of pupils are from White British backgrounds and the rest are from a range of heritages. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is similar to all schools nationally.
- The proportion of pupils identified with special educational needs through school action is below average, as is the proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals and for whom the school receives additional funding (the pupil premium) is lower than average. There are no looked after children or pupils from service families, groups also eligible for the pupil premium.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching to accelerate rates of progress by:
 - reducing the length of teachers' introductions to lessons so that pupils have more time to complete work and apply their skills
 - ensuring that teachers plan appropriate tasks for pupils who sometimes find learning more difficult so that they do not rely so heavily on adult support
 - providing more opportunities for all pupils to make choices about the resources they use and how to record their work
 - giving children in the Early Years Foundation Stage more planned opportunities to practise and develop their early literacy and numeracy skills in the outdoor learning area.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children enter the school with skills and abilities that are broadly in line with those expected for their age, although their communication and language skills are lower than other areas of learning. They make good progress across the Early Years Foundation Stage and through Years 1 and 2, especially in reading, so that by the end of Key Stage 1 their attainment is above national levels.
- This good progress continues across Years 3 to 6 and pupils leave the school with attainment that is above national averages in writing and significantly high in reading and mathematics.
- The school has been successful in promoting equality of opportunity for all pupils. At the time of the last inspection boys were doing much better than girls. As a result of improvements to teaching and careful tracking of rates of progress of all pupils, this is not now the case and there is little difference in the achievement of boys and girls. As one girl in Year 6 said, 'Our teacher focuses on everybody – nobody is left out!'
- The gap in attainment between those pupils who are eligible for pupil premium funding and the rest is narrowing as a result of the governing body's decision to target the funds explicitly on additional support for individual pupils, including a programme to boost their achievement in mathematics.
- The school's own assessment data show that, in all year groups, those pupils who benefit from pupil premium funding are beginning to reach similar levels of attainment, as measured by their average point scores, to other pupils in the school in both English and mathematics.
- The achievement of White British pupils in the school is good in all subjects. Inspectors found that pupils from minority ethnic heritages achieve as well as other pupils.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language make rapid progress in both English and mathematics because adults understand their needs and plan activities that help them become confident in speaking and writing English.
- The school has put in place a well planned programme of phonics teaching where pupils practise reading and spelling on a daily basis. The teaching of phonics is a strength of the school and has led to pupils becoming confident, competent readers. Across the school, pupils enjoy reading widely and often, which promotes high achievement in this subject for all groups of pupils.
- Disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and others who find learning difficult, benefit from a range of group and individual support from teaching assistants. Although they make progress at these times, they sometimes rely too much on adult support and are not developing enough independence in their learning. Occasionally, they struggle to complete their work in the classroom because teachers plan work that is too hard for them to tackle on their own.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching across the school is typically good and has improved since the last inspection. As a result, pupils make good progress.
- Pupils enjoy the opportunity to discuss and think through ideas with their talk partners. This was the case in an effective lesson in Year 2 where pupils enthusiastically discussed the features of a castle including portcullis, drawbridge and murder holes! Sometimes teachers' introductions and explanations are too long which limit the time for pupils to work on their own.
- The quality of marking is excellent. Across the school, teachers provide detailed comments on pupils' work and identify clearly what pupils need to do to make their work even better. Pupils are given time to respond to these comments and their books demonstrated how they had improved their work in response to feedback from teachers.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, teachers plan a range of interesting, imaginative activities

which children enjoy. During the inspection, adults skilfully extended children's vocabulary by encouraging them to discuss why pirates might use a compass and an anchor. However, there are not enough opportunities for children to extend their learning and apply and practise their skills in the outdoor learning area.

- Although teachers' planning is generally appropriate for most groups of pupils, tasks for those who find learning more difficult, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, are occasionally not sufficiently well adapted so they can tackle them on their own without adult support.
- Teachers sometimes over-direct learning and do not give pupils enough opportunities to make choices about the resources they can use or how to record their work.
- The teaching of reading is a strength of the school and parents support pupils' reading effectively through regular reading homework. The school has a systematic programme of phonics teaching in place and pupils are making rapid progress in manipulating sounds to read and spell words. Pupils in Year 1 enjoyed sounding out a set of letters to see if they made a real word and then consigning the 'pseudo' words to the bin.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' behaviour around the school is consistently good and often exemplary. Pupils are polite, well mannered and friendly. One teaching assistant said she was proud when members of the public commented on the children's good behaviour during educational visits.
- In the classrooms, during lessons, pupils' behaviour is generally good, although minor disruptive incidents occasionally occur, which is why behaviour is not outstanding. These incidents tend to happen when teachers spend too long on the introductions to lessons or when pupils are not given any choices in what resources to use or how to record their work. Adults consistently apply the school's behaviour policy and deal with these incidents quickly and effectively so they do not have a negative impact on the learning of others.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school because they know adults will take any concerns seriously. Parents all agreed their children are safe in school.
- Relationships between adults and pupils and between pupils themselves are good which leads to a positive ethos in the school. Pupils show increasing social awareness and maturity as they pass through the school so that they are well prepared for the transition into secondary school.
- The school successfully ensures there is no discrimination. Pupils from different backgrounds play together happily at playtimes and support each other well in lessons.
- Pupils say bullying hardly ever happens, but when it does it is dealt with quickly. The school's own records confirmed incidences of bullying are rare. Pupils have a good understanding of what constitutes bullying and of the different types of bullying, such as racism and cyber bullying. They know how to keep themselves safe when using the internet.
- Pupils' attendance is above average and pupils are generally punctual.

The leadership and management are good

- The acting headteacher and the acting deputy headteacher have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and of the areas which need further improvement. They have identified relevant priorities relating to improving the quality of teaching, promoting independent learning and accelerating rates of progress, especially for pupils with disabilities and special educational needs.
- Plans clearly show how successes will be measured. This was an area identified at the last inspection and is evidence of capacity for further improvement. Leaders have high expectations of all who work in the school and staff are fully supportive of their leadership.
- Recent improvements in teaching are due to a systematic approach to checking all aspects of teachers' performance and ensuring appropriate support is given. Middle leaders are enthusiastic

and focused on securing improvements in their subject areas.

- The school provides an exciting curriculum, which reflects the leaders' determination that spiritual, moral, social and cultural development should be central to all aspects of school life. Pupils spoke with enthusiasm about opportunities to learn about different festivals and cultures. They clearly took pride in their books which were well presented and provided evidence of many opportunities for applying literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects.
- Links with parents, carers and the local community are strong. Parents are highly positive about the work of the school, recognising their children are safe, happy and achieving well.
- The local authority currently provides an enhanced level of support to the school because there is an acting headteacher and an acting deputy headteacher.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Members of the governing body have a wide range of skills, including backgrounds in finance and education. They know the school's results compare well to the national data and are determined that all pupils should continue to achieve as well as they can. They receive detailed information on the overall performance of teachers and the strategies in place to make sure a higher proportion of teaching is outstanding. They provide an appropriate balance of challenge and support. Governors ensure performance management procedures are carried out effectively and do not authorise any salary progression unless there is clear evidence that pupils are making better than expected progress. They have recently reviewed how the school is using the pupil premium funding and know that gaps are now closing between the attainment of pupils eligible for the funding and the rest. They have undertaken a range of training to make sure their knowledge is fully up to date. They keep a close eye on the budget to ensure that spending is linked to the school's priorities. Governors ensure that all statutory requirements related to health, safety and staff vetting are carried out conscientiously.

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	118587
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	403349

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	489
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Frances Honey
Headteacher	Lynda Clement
Date of previous school inspection	25–26 June 2008
Telephone number	01322 226019
Fax number	01322 220121
Email address	office@west-hill.kent.sch.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2013

