

Hermitage Primary School

Belmont Road, Uxbridge, UB8 1RB

Inspection dates 12–13 November 2012

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Although results and rates of progress have recently risen significantly in both Key Stages 1 and 2, the school has still to show that it is able to maintain this improvement.
- While the overall quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection, some elements of teaching, such as making sure that the most able pupils do well, require further improvement.
- Planning for learning in the Reception classes does not build on the excellent progress that children make in the Nursery. The use of resources and the outside space is not contributing to all areas of learning.
- The work of senior leaders and governors in evaluating the school's success and in checking the quality of teaching and learning across the school is not yet rigorous enough.
- Parents do not all find senior leaders approachable and they do not get enough information about the progress their children are making.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher and assistant headteacher are ambitious and they are well supported by a very dedicated team of staff.
- Progress for current pupils is now improving as a result of recent improvements in teaching.
- Pupils' behaviour is good and pupils have a good awareness of safety.
- Provision in the Nursery class is excellent and helps children to get their education off to a very good start.
- Pupils get along very well together and are very respectful of one another's cultures and beliefs.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 23 lessons or parts of lessons. Three of these were jointly observed with the headteacher.
- Inspectors heard pupils read and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors examined the 45 responses to the on-line Parent View questionnaire, read letters and emails submitted to them during the inspection, examined the results of the school's most recent survey of parent and carer opinion, and took into account the outcomes of a staff survey.
- A discussion was held with a member of the local authority's advisory staff.
- One formal discussion was held with pupils.
- Inspectors examined progress data and other school documentation, including safeguarding information.
- The lead inspector held a discussion with three members of the governing body.
- Inspectors held discussions with parents and carers of pupils at the school and with members of the school staff.

Inspection team

Tim McLoughlin, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Julie Quarell

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a one form entry primary school with nine classes. Pupil numbers are average although numbers have increased with the addition of two Reception classes. The school has plans for growth and will be a two form entry school from next year.
- Children attend the Nursery in either the morning or afternoon.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs supported at school action is lower than average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils from ethnic minority groups is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who join or leave the school at other than the usual times is about average.
- The school meets the current government's floor standards, which set minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- A lower than average percentage of pupils is known to be eligible for additional funding through the initiative known as the pupil premium.
- The school's teaching staff structure has undergone significant changes over recent years and several teachers have joined since the previous inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the recent improvement in achievement in reading, writing and mathematics in both key stages is sustained by:
 - ensuring that teachers have high expectations of all groups of pupils, especially the most able, consistently in all parts of lessons
 - improving the use of questioning so that pupils have opportunities to develop their thinking and reasoning skills
 - improving the use of teachers' feedback in lessons and in marking so that the dialogue between teachers and pupils brings about rapid improvements in pupils' work
 - improving the quality and marking of homework so that these build more successfully on what pupils learn in school
 - providing individual targets that are based on pupils' current work and tracking data on their progress which are clearly understood by the pupils.
- Improve planning in the Reception classes so that teachers build on the children's prior learning and make the best use of all the resources, including the outside area.
- Improve the overall quality of leadership in the school by:
 - increasing the proportion of good and better teaching through more effective monitoring and links to tailored training opportunities
 - ensuring that rigorous monitoring of the school's work leads to accurate self-evaluation
 - engaging better with parents so that their views are taken fully into account and they are kept better informed about their children's progress and ways in which they can help them at home.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Data analysis indicates that most pupils make adequate progress over time. Recently, pupils have begun to show improved rates of progress and higher attainment. The Year 6 cohort in 2012 made good progress over recent years; this was due to improved teaching for this group in the previous academic year and the effects of additional small group teaching. However, currently the most able pupils do not always make the progress that they are capable of in mathematics and English.
- Results in 2012 were a significant improvement on previous years. Pupils in both key stages reached broadly average standards, rising from a below average trend over previous years. Most Year 6 pupils reached the expected level in both English and mathematics and more pupils than previously reached the higher levels. Attainment in Key Stage 1 was above average and the Year 1 pupils did better than average in their test of early reading. However, all of these improvements are relatively recent and the school has not yet established a pattern of good achievement across all year groups.
- The pupil premium is being used well for one-to-one tuition, group support, extra staffing and resources and is helping the drive to accelerate pupils' progress. There is also an innovative social skills group which helps build pupils' self-confidence. As a result, the gap in attainment between those for whom this extra finance is intended and other pupils is narrowing. Pupils from minority ethnic groups are now making improved progress and attain at standards close to the national average.
- Progress in reading, for the majority of pupils, is supported well by good teaching, including that of phonics (linking sounds and letters). Nevertheless, pupils' reading skills are not always developed as much as possible out of the classroom and at home; for example, the reading books that pupils take home are not always changed often enough to keep up with the progress they are making.
- Attainment on entry to both the Nursery and Reception classes is in line with typical expectations. The school has improved Nursery provision recently. The new Nursery class is well resourced with a very good balance of child-initiated and teacher-led workstations. Parents also play a valuable part in the work taking place in this class and the children are happy, settled and actively encouraged to foster a love of learning. For example, one child, who was interested in spiders, was using the correct mathematical language to add and count on the number of legs it had. Children make excellent progress in the Nursery class and often reach average levels of attainment in the different areas of learning.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make adequate progress as a result of the support that is provided for them. The new inclusion coordinator is aware that progress in reading is slow for these pupils and is putting in steps to ensure that they catch up more rapidly in the future.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teachers generally plan lesson activities effectively for different abilities, but teachers' expectations of pupils are not always high enough. Introductions to mathematics and English lessons do not always challenge higher ability pupils well enough. Sometimes, for instance in Years 5 and 6, the pupils already have a good understanding of the material being introduced to them and this is not always taken into consideration.
- In lessons, not all staff question pupils effectively. Too frequently they accept simple one word answers where pupils, especially those who are more able, are capable of much more in-depth answers that would enable them to develop their speaking and reasoning skills.
- The quality of feedback and marking is not yet consistently good across the school and the dialogue between pupils and teachers in marking does not always support rapid improvement.

The targets set for pupils are not consistently based on pupils' current work or progress data, and some of the pupils are not aware of their targets. The marking of homework is inconsistent in Key Stage 2 and so is not used well to build on what learning has taken place during the school day.

- Teachers make good use of literacy in different subjects. In geography in Year 4, pupils were writing in thoughtful ways about how a photographer had captured the emotions of children in a school in Nigeria and they were contrasting this with their own experiences in Uxbridge. Such opportunities to write imaginatively in different subjects help pupils to progress in writing.
- Teaching in the Nursery is outstanding; children are immersed in a range of activities which develop their skills. A striking example was a mini-carousel of trays and puppets being used to recreate the *We're Going on a Bear Hunt* story which really enthralled the children. The school's use of the spacious outside area, which has recently been redeveloped, is improving.
- Staff have good skills in teaching letter sounds and helping pupils understand what they read. Key Stage 1 pupils enjoyed a reading lesson which included songs and rhyme to help them remember letter sounds and the teacher created a positive atmosphere in the class which ensured all children wanted to take part.
- Teachers, particularly those with more experience, teach with enthusiasm and energy and this helps pupils in these classes to make good progress. For instance, in a Year 2 physical education lesson the teacher engaged all the pupils by joining in the lesson herself and, in Year 3, pupils had learned a song to help them remember how to multiply whole numbers by fractions.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage play and work well, showing high levels of maturity, self-regulation and cooperation. They are keen to take on helpful jobs around the classes, such as putting things away and helping their friends when they are in difficulty.
- Around the school pupils are well behaved. Pupils said that behaviour is usually like this and set high standards for one another. Pupils are very proud of their school and say that the teachers are kind and help them do the best they can in their work. The school works hard with the small number of pupils who have emotional problems to help them to improve their behaviour.
- Attendance is good; it has been improved significantly since the last inspection and continues to be above the national average. The school's punctuality has also improved as a result of the 'soft start' introduced by the headteacher to help the school day start in a more controlled way.
- Pupils feel safe in school, and say that there is very little bullying and that behaviour over time is typically good. Pupils are aware of the different types of bullying, including cyber bullying. A small number of parents expressed concerns about the school's response to bullying, but inspectors found that suitable steps are taken to deal with issues.
- Pupils take their responsibilities around the school seriously and are clearly very respectful of one another and show care and respect. Playground supervisors help to calm down what can be sometimes boisterous play on the school's playground. The outside space is small and the school's leaders are aware of the need to further supervise the lunchtime period. They intend to involve the use of pupils more in helping everyone enjoy lunchtimes even more.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The headteacher and senior leaders do not check the quality of teaching thoroughly enough to make sure that it is consistently good or better. Because of this, some pupils do not do as well as they should, especially the more able in Key Stage 2. Some teachers feel that they would like additional support from senior leaders to help them take part in more tailored training. Systems for managing staff performance are, however, secure and applied consistently.
- Safeguarding arrangements are effective because staff are regularly reminded about child protection matters and pupils who may be vulnerable. Important documentation is up to date.

The school effectively ensures that pupils are not discriminated against.

- The priorities on the school development plan are the correct ones and focus on pupils' achievement; the plan also reflects senior leaders' ambition for the school. This, together with recent improvements in achievement, shows that there is secure capacity for improvement in the future. Nevertheless, the school's evaluation of its own performance is too generous. The school has received minimal, light touch support from the local authority.
- The school takes into account the views of parents through its annual survey. However, inspectors found that a number of parents think that the school could do more to listen to their views and communicate information about their children's learning and progress more clearly. A small number of parents said that they found that the headteacher did not take their opinions into account sufficiently.
- The curriculum has improved recently and is developing well, with aspects of different subjects linked together. The school has adopted the use of pupils engaging with works of art as a stimulus for further study. Pupils in Key Stage 2 look forward to their residential trip to France in Year 6 and the overnight stay near the River Thames in Marlow. Such visits contribute well to pupils' spiritual and social development. Religious education helps pupils understand different faiths and cultures.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is suitably trained and skilled so that members are now beginning to challenge and ask questions and hold the school to account. As a result, it has an increasingly accurate view of how the school is performing in relation to standards nationally and in comparison to similar schools. It has not yet gathered thorough first hand evidence of the quality of teaching. Similarly, governors do not yet have a secure understanding of what the school is doing, or should be planning to do, to recognise and reward good teachers through salary progression or to establish how to tackle underperformance. Financial oversight of the budget as a whole is effective. The governors have helped to ensure that the pupil premium is used well for one-to-one tuition, group support, extra staffing and resources and helping the drive to accelerate pupils' progress. As a result, the gap in attainment between those for whom this extra finance is intended and other pupils is narrowing.

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	102405
Local authority	Hillingdon
Inspection number	404819

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

Type of school	All-through
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	240
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Seona Barrow
Headteacher	Andrea Fricker
Date of previous school inspection	27 June 2011
Telephone number	01895 234871
Fax number	01895 258711
Email address	hermitage@hillingdongrid.org

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