

Chambersbury Primary School

Hill Common, Bennetts End, Hemel Hempstead, HP3 8JH

Inspection dates

14–15 March 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	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 make good progress in all year groups and achieve well in English and mathematics.
- Pupils enjoy school and have positive attitudes to their learning. In this supportive and encouraging environment, they feel safe and confident.
- Staff make their expectations for work and behaviour clear and manage lessons effectively, so pupils behave well.
- Pupils' work is marked regularly, and they understand the colour-coded system that shows what they need to do to improve their work.
- Pupils enjoy reading. They develop good reading skills across the school.
- The headteacher has high expectations of the teachers. Inadequate teaching has been tackled, performance has been checked regularly and teachers have been supported to improve their skills.
- As a result teaching and learning are good across the school, and some of the teaching is outstanding. Teachers form good working relationships with their classes.
- The good leadership and management of the headteacher and the governing body have enabled the school to improve in many important areas of its work since its previous inspection.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Some teachers are not checking regularly on pupils' learning enough to address any underachievement rapidly.
- Pupils are not given enough opportunities to apply the skills they learn in numeracy in other subjects.
- Sometimes the more-able pupils are not given work that gets the best out of them.
- Some pupils make slower progress in writing because of weaknesses in their spelling and handwriting, and not enough opportunities to edit and improve their writing.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 15 lessons, one of which was seen with the headteacher and two with each of the assistant headteachers. In addition, the inspectors made a number of other shorter visits to lessons. All teachers were observed. The inspectors listened to pupils read.
- Discussions were held with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body, staff and a representative from the local authority.
- Formal and informal discussions were held with pupils about their work, their learning and their behaviour in the school.
- The inspectors attended two assemblies, observed break times and looked at the school’s website.
- A wide range of documentation was looked at, including the school’s self-evaluation and improvement plans, information about pupils’ progress and records of governing body meetings. School policies and records relating to teaching quality, behaviour, safety and attendance were also evaluated, together with the school’s safeguarding procedures.
- The inspectors took account of the 17 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and a survey of parents’ views recently carried out by the school.
- Questionnaires from 18 staff were considered.

Inspection team

Susan Thomas-Pounce, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Lynne Thorogood	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic heritage is above average, although the proportions who speak English as an additional language and those at the early stage of learning English are broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in local authority care and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, is above that found nationally.
- The proportion of pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs and are supported at school action is average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who join or leave partway through the school year is above average.
- Since the last inspection, the school has had significant staff changes. The teachers of the Year 1 and Year 5 classes took up their posts in September 2012.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that it leads to faster progress in English and mathematics by:
 - making sure that all teachers regularly use their knowledge of how well pupils are doing to address underachievement as soon as possible
 - ensuring that more-able pupils are always challenged to reach the higher National Curriculum levels they are capable of
 - giving pupils more opportunities in different subjects to use and develop their mathematical skills, including their problem-solving skills
 - improving the spelling and handwriting skills of all pupils
 - enabling more pupils in Years 3 and 4 to redraft and edit their writing
 - raising the profile of writing in work displayed.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Most children join the nursery with levels of knowledge and understanding below those expected nationally at this age. In the nursery and Reception class, high expectations and effective teaching ensure they make good progress in developing their early reading, writing and mathematics skills.
- All of the pupils who received the pupil premium in Year 6 last year made good progress. This was a result of well-targeted support provided by individual or small group teaching. While their attainment in mathematics was as high as that of other pupils, their previously limited literacy skills meant that a few were a term or two behind others in English.
- Although standards in Year 6 in writing dipped in 2012 most pupils, including those who found learning more difficult, made good progress from Year 3 to Year 6. A high proportion of those who were at the school throughout Key Stage 2 made better than expected progress.
- Evidence from lessons, pupils' work and the school's reliable data shows that since September, progress has continued to improve and all pupils in the school are doing well. Most parents who completed the online questionnaire agreed with this. The work in pupils' books shows that the more-able pupils make good progress overall, but do not always reach the higher National Curriculum levels they are capable of.
- Pupils have good opportunities to read for a variety of purposes in lessons. In talks with inspectors most pupils said that they read for pleasure and those who read aloud showed persistence in working out new words. An effective approach to teaching phonics (the sounds that letters make) is helping all pupils with their reading, but inaccurate spelling and weak handwriting are preventing them from reaching higher standards in writing. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 do not get enough chance to redraft and edit their writing. More opportunities in Years 5 and 6 enable these older pupils to make much better progress.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress because they are supported well. The very small number from a minority ethnic background also achieve well. Good support is provided by well-briefed adults when working with pupils in the classroom or on a one-to-one basis.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good, and a growing proportion is outstanding, thanks to the school's good use of a wide range of staff training.
- The very youngest children enjoy a wide variety of interesting and exciting activities. They are encouraged to choose their own activities, which helps them to learn through independent exploration. There is a good balance between activities led by adults and those that children choose for themselves. Good teaching of phonics is having a big impact on standards.
- Relationships between teachers and pupils are strong and this has a very good impact on learning. In a Year 6 mathematics lesson pupils were provided with excellent resources that enabled them to make rapid progress. They were very excited to solve clues at a 'crime scene' where some school equipment had been 'stolen'. They eagerly discussed the measurement of the handprint, even wondering if they might find some DNA to test. The teacher continually

checked on pupils' progress and their understanding of the task. This ensured that all were fully involved in excellent learning opportunities.

- Teachers normally use additional adults in class well so that pupils can work in small groups. This is particularly the case for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. Pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium are also effectively supported in small groups or individually as required.
- Teachers display good subject knowledge and know their pupils very well. Usually, lessons are closely matched to pupils' needs. Occasionally, the most able pupils are not given demanding enough tasks so the level of challenge is not high enough. This acts as a barrier to accelerating progress.
- Although teachers are now making good links across different subjects to encourage pupils to practise their writing skills, they do not get enough chance to apply their numeracy skills. Pupils do not regularly practise their numeracy skills in solving problems.
- Pupils usually concentrate well, work sensibly and maturely in small groups, and show good independence when required to work on their own. Pupils like assessing how well they have done in lessons. Teachers mark work regularly. The tracking of pupils' learning has greatly improved. However, the use of this information is at an early stage and it is not yet fully embedded in teachers' everyday lesson planning.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They enjoy coming to school and are polite and considerate. Parents and carers think that the school nurtures and cares for their children extremely well.
- Behaviour in lessons is good because pupils are set clear boundaries for their conduct. Staff manage pupils' behaviour well, largely through positive praise and rewards for good work and behaviour.
- Pupils say they feel very safe. They have a good understanding of how to keep safe. They are taught this through topic work and assemblies. Parents, carers and staff are confident the school is a safe place where good behaviour is the norm. Behaviour records show that exclusions are rare, and that any behaviour that does not meet the school's high expectations is dealt with promptly.
- A few parents expressed concerns about bullying. From discussions with pupils and the anti-bullying leaflet they had made, it was clear that they know about the different types of bullying, including cyber-bullying. Pupils confirmed that instances of bullying of any type are rare and they have full confidence in staff to sort out any problems that may arise. Pupils, staff and the majority of parents share this view. The wide range of evidence gathered and examined during the inspection supports the view that behaviour is typically good and incidents of bullying are infrequent.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is effective. Pupils have a very well-developed sense of right and wrong. They appreciate that people are different, and show tolerance and a genuine desire to support those less well off than themselves.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, staff and governors have worked well together to move the school from satisfactory to good. Weaker teaching has been dealt with effectively, and pupils in all age groups now benefit from good teaching. Teachers' performance is regularly checked against how much progress their pupils make. As a result of the rigorous checks made on teaching and how well staff respond to the identified areas for improvement, achievement and teaching have improved considerably. The school has the capacity to continue this improvement.
- Leaders have a very clear picture of the performance of all individuals and groups of pupils in the school. They take careful note of the achievement of pupils who are new to the school, as well as those who have attended the school since joining the nursery or Reception, to ensure that any gaps in knowledge and understanding are closed as quickly as possible.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well through close involvement with the local community. Pupils participate in many community activities and regularly join in with fundraising for local and national charities.
- The way different subjects are taught focuses sharply on improving key skills and motivates pupils well. The mix of subjects and activities is adapted to pupils' needs and interests. The school makes sure that all pupils have equal access to all activities and does not tolerate any discrimination. Although the school is rich in displays that encourage pupils to reflect upon their learning, there are not enough examples of pupils' good extended writing on display to further promote improvements.
- The leadership of the school manages finances efficiently. Good use of the money available through the pupil premium is having a positive impact on eligible pupils' good progress. For example, it is used well to give these pupils access to out-of-school and enrichment activities. Additional funds to assist disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are used effectively to enable them to learn well across the full range of activities.
- The local authority has given effective advice and good support to the school during its recent turbulent times. General support, as well as focused consultancy support, was provided for leaders and managers to help the headteacher improve the standard of teaching. The local authority now provides appropriately 'light-touch' support for this good school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The effective governing body has worked hard since the last inspection to improve its ability to support and challenge the school. The governors have tackled difficult issues around staffing and demonstrated that they effectively challenge and hold senior leaders to account for school improvement. Governors question leaders about their work. They closely analyse the data about pupils' progress, so they know how well different groups of pupils within the school are doing and make comparisons with other schools nationally. They understand how targets are set for teachers and how the school deals with any underperformance. Governors ensure that salary increases are linked not only to good or better teaching, but also the progress made by pupils. They regularly attend training events to improve their knowledge and expertise. The governing body makes sure that all national requirements, including those for safeguarding, are met. They manage the school's finances well. For example, they check the effectiveness of pupil premium spending by measuring its impact on closing the gap in performance between eligible pupils and other groups.

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	117214
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	405694

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	185
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Helen Mercer-Smith
Headteacher	Desmond Taylor
Date of previous school inspection	7 February 2011
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