

Whitehill Infant School

Luxford Road, Crowborough, East Sussex, TN6 2HW

Inspection dates 23–24 April 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. Children's good progress in Reception is built on successfully in Key Stage 1.
- Nearly all teaching is good and some is outstanding. Teachers guide pupils' learning well and use interesting resources to support topics which pupils thoroughly enjoy.
- Classroom relationships are of a high quality, which help to promote high levels of enthusiasm and the good attitudes pupils show in their work. Behaviour is good.
- Staff provide high levels of pastoral care, and pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable are given good support, enabling them to make the same good progress as their classmates.
- Attendance is above average.
- The school is led and managed well by experienced senior leaders. Governors fulfil their statutory duties and have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough teaching is outstanding. Teachers do not always ensure that all tasks are sufficiently challenging, especially for those pupils who are more able.
- Additional adults are not always used effectively at the start of lessons to support small groups.
- Pupils' achievement is not outstanding as not enough pupils make rapid and sustained progress to reach the higher levels.
- Teachers' marking and their discussions with pupils do not provide enough help to ensure that pupils know how to improve their work and take responsibility for doing so.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in 14 lessons taught by seven teachers. Two of these lessons were observed jointly with a member of the senior leadership team.
- Meetings were held with governors, staff and groups of pupils, and a telephone discussion was held with a representative of the local authority.
- Samples of work from pupils in Year 2 were analysed, and a group of pupils from Year 1 read to an inspector.
- Inspectors took account of the 22 questionnaires completed by staff and the 43 responses to the online Parent View survey.
- Inspectors looked at a range of evidence, including work in pupils' books, monitoring records, the school's own data on pupils' progress, policies and records relating to safeguarding, attendance records and records of visits made by representatives from the local authority.

Inspection team

Gavin Jones, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Maureen Coleman

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is smaller than the average-sized primary school. Its numbers have increased substantially since the last inspection.
- It has provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage in three Reception classes. The privately run Nursery on site, which shares some of the school's facilities, is not managed by the school's governing body and is subject to a separate inspection.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage, and very few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is much lower than average, but the proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for looked after children, pupils eligible for free school meals or children of service families, is below average. There are no children of service families at the school.
- The school is federated with Herne Junior School and shares an executive headteacher and a joint governing body. Herne Junior School was inspected at the same time as part of a coordinated inspection. The report is available separately on the Ofsted website.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching in the school to outstanding by:
 - ensuring that all tasks planned by teachers are sufficiently demanding, especially for the more-able pupils
 - sharing the very best practice in the school with all teachers and, where appropriate, visiting other schools to observe outstanding teaching.
- Raise attainment further in reading, writing and mathematics by:
 - making better use of additional adults at the start of lessons to focus on and support particular groups of learners
 - ensuring that marking is used more consistently to help pupils improve their work, giving them time to respond to suggestions and to take more responsibility for extending their own learning.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- When children start school in Reception, their skills are below those typically expected for their age. By the time they leave at the end of Year 2, their attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is at the national average. This represents good progress and good achievement from their starting points.
- Last year, pupils in Year 2 did less well in mathematics than in previous years and pupils in Year 1 did not do as well as other pupils nationally in the national screening check to see how well pupils are learning the sounds that letters make (phonics). The school has addressed these issues and pupils currently in these year groups are making much better progress and have already surpassed the standards attained last year in reading and mathematics. However, the proportion of pupils reaching the higher Level 3 is not as high as in previous years as some teachers do not challenge the potential of the more-able pupils regularly enough in mathematics and writing.
- Girls' achievement is slightly lower than that of boys in reading and mathematics but higher in writing. In all cases, these differences are not significant.
- Children make good progress, especially in communication, language and literacy, which are much weaker on entry to the school, because of effective teaching throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage. Adults make good use of accurate assessments to plan work to match children's needs.
- Pupils' art work throughout the school is of good quality. Work on display, related to David Hockney and Georgia O'Keefe, together with detailed pencil drawings of footwear and bicycles, illustrate that teaching has been effective in providing pupils with a wide range of skills.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress in line with other pupils, because they receive effective support from teaching assistants. Pupils' needs are identified clearly and their support plans are detailed and appropriate. Families of these pupils also receive good support so that they can contribute to their child's learning.
- Pupils supported through the pupil premium make good progress because of the extra resources provided. Some pupils have made more rapid progress than their classmates as their support is often on a one-to-one basis or in very small groups. The gaps, therefore, between the attainment of pupils supported through pupil premium and other pupils in both mathematics and English is not only closing rapidly, but for several, has already closed. Additional adults in lessons are deployed well when pupils are working at their tasks, but they are not used as well at the start of lessons to help small groups of pupils improve their attainment.
- Nearly all parents who responded to the online survey or completed the last questionnaire sent to parents agree that their children are making good progress.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Almost all teaching is good and some is outstanding, enabling pupils to make good progress. Not enough opportunities have been given for teachers to see or learn from the outstanding practice in the school or elsewhere.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and manage them exceptionally well. This promotes positive and sometimes excellent attitudes to work. For example, in a Year 2 science lesson, the teacher adapted her teaching to take account of the progress pupils were making. Pupils were engaged particularly well in learning as they planned for a fair test. They worked effectively in groups and were able to make good use of their literacy skills.
- Basic skills are taught well and teachers build lessons carefully on previous learning. Topic work links different subjects together well. Art lessons, for example, are closely linked to work on plants in science, so that pupils do not see learning as a series of unconnected activities.
- In the teacher-led sessions in the Early Years Foundation Stage, children are taught well for

these short bursts of learning, and then move effortlessly to learning arising from play activities that they initiate themselves. Both outside and inside the classrooms, work is now much more closely related, an issue addressed well from the previous inspection.

- Teachers' clear guidance and good questioning skills ensure pupils know what they are expected to learn and help them explain their learning to others. Teachers make good use of new technology to present new information and focus pupils' learning, as in lessons seen in art, science and writing.
- Teachers check on the progress of different groups of pupils during lessons. At a more general level, teachers make good use of previous information about pupils' progress to help them group pupils in lessons and ensure that work is matched to their needs.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are helped to learn well. Teachers ensure that they are fully involved in lessons and during activities teaching assistants engage pupils in much discussion about their tasks in order to help improve their speaking and listening skills.
- Teachers' marking is regular and offers praise to pupils where appropriate. It does not always show pupils how they can improve their work. Teachers do not allow enough time for pupils to respond to any comments they make or help them to understand how they can use this advice to take more control over their own improvement.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' behaviour is almost always good and sometimes exemplary. Their attitudes to learning are positive and from time-to-time are exemplary. For example, in a lesson where pupils were using modelling skills on their computers, one could have heard a pin drop as they followed instructions carefully and not only had fun but made considerable progress in their computer skills. Parents are unanimous in agreeing that behaviour is good. School records show that incidents of poor behaviour are uncommon.
- Pupils feel safe in school and are well informed about how to keep safe. They show that they understand what bullying is but are equally sure that it very rarely happens and if it does, staff deal with it promptly. Again, parents agree with this.
- The school has put much effort in encouraging parents to support better attendance for their children. This has had a very positive effect as attendance for all groups of pupils is now above average.
- Pupils are keen to be involved in taking on responsibilities, including being members of the environmental Green Team, gardening, collecting registers and being a school councillor. This fosters a sense of responsibility, self-discipline and, relative to their age, a mature outlook.
- Children in Reception are happy and secure in their well-ordered classes. They know routines well and play their own part in preparing and clearing up their equipment.
- Even with the youngest children, there is a sense of community and a true sense of pride in their school. Pupils and the school place high value in recognising and rewarding behaviour, effort and good work.

The leadership and management are good

- The school is led effectively by a team of experienced and committed senior leaders.
- Through strong leadership, teaching is consistently good, with some outstanding practice. The school has used its performance management structure effectively to provide targets and relevant professional development opportunities for teachers in order to ensure that they make good progress towards meeting these targets.
- The school's self-evaluation and plans for future development are accurate and sharply focused. Key priorities are identified and plans have dates for completion and notes on how the school will recognise success. The plans do not include clear indications of which governors or

committees will monitor the success of the school's progress in meeting its priorities.

- Leaders use tracking information effectively to direct resources and focus their attention for improvements. The information is also used well in meetings where the progress of pupils is analysed on a regular basis and teachers are then given targets for these pupils to achieve for the next meeting.
- The programme of work that pupils follow offers them broad and balanced opportunities to learn, using exciting and wide-ranging topics with many memorable aspects. In the Reception classes, folders of Learning Journeys record in detail children's achievement in different areas of learning alongside observation notes. The wildlife area is now an exceptionally well-used resource to support the curriculum. Pupils talk excitedly about their knowledge of plants and insects and know about the importance of looking after the environment.
- The school fosters pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. In particular, the work with the Nancy George Academy in Kenya gives pupils a very clear understanding of life in a different culture. These links are very real, as they range from visitors and photographs to sending pencils and raising funds for the children there. The school promotes equal opportunities well and through its actions ensures there is no discrimination and that all groups make good progress.
- The local authority has provided the school with useful support for checking on the quality of assessment in the Early Years Foundation Stage as well as joint training with the junior school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has a realistic understanding of the school's strengths and what it needs to do to become an even better school. Some governors make good use of information from the school and from the National Curriculum tests to see where the school needs to improve. They have a clear understanding of teaching quality, how the performance of teachers is managed and how this information may be used in any proposed promotions or salary increases. The governing body ensures all the statutory safeguarding and vetting procedures are met. They know how pupil premium funds are spent and are kept informed of the impact of this on pupils' progress, within their careful management of the school budget. They do not, however, gain enough of their information from first-hand visits to the school, in order, for example, to check for themselves on the progress of aspects of the school development plan.

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	114392
Local authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	403742

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	183
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Brian McAteer
Headteacher	Tracy Robinson
Date of previous school inspection	16–17 June 2010
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