

# High Ongar Primary School

The Street, High Ongar, Ongar, CM5 9NB

**Inspection dates** 25–26 April 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
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

- Provision and progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage, while recently stabilised, is not yet good. Assessment practice in the recent past has been inaccurate.
- While teaching in Years 3 to 6 is increasingly effective, some inconsistencies in pupils' progress remain. As a result, standards by the end of Year 6 remain broadly average.
- Pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs do not yet make consistently good progress.
- Teachers' expectations of the quality of pupils' written work are not always high enough in subjects other than literacy and numeracy.
- Strategies for the evaluation of pupils' progress are still developing; the marking of their work only occasionally indicates what they need to do to improve.
- School leaders and governors do not always evaluate pupils' progress and attainment accurately.
- Pupils' attendance is below average at present.

### The school has the following strengths

- Pupils make particularly good progress in Year 2 because teaching is consistently good.
- Progress of pupils in Years 5 and 6 has improved.
- The attainment of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is at least as good as that of other pupils.
- Pupils enjoy school and their behaviour is a significant strength. They feel safe and their attitudes to learning are good.
- Senior leaders have a clear view about the improvements needed.
- The curriculum offers pupils a wide range of engaging activities, in and out of lessons.
- Governors demonstrate a high level of commitment. They are thorough in their approach and are knowledgeable about the management of staff performance.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed seven lessons, of which five were seen together with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with a group of pupils, the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body and another governor, the school's leaders, and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector took account of the 52 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View).
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a range of school documentation, including records of school checks on the quality of teaching, the school improvement plan, and records relating to behaviour, attendance, safeguarding and pupils' progress. He also looked closely at pupils' written work and listened to pupils reading.

## Inspection team

George Logan, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- High Ongar Primary School is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- Pupils are taught in five mixed-age classes in the afternoons. However, older pupils are taught in single-year classes in the mornings.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported by school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also below average.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, those in the care of a local authority and those from forces families) is well below the national average. There are, currently, no pupils in care or from forces families on roll.
- 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 the quality of teaching so that a higher proportion is good or outstanding, by:
  - setting higher expectations of the quality of pupils' written work in all subjects
  - embedding rigorous approaches to supporting pupils' progress, so that assessment practice in the Early Years Foundation Stage is robust and the marking of pupils' work in Years 1 to 6 shows them clearly what they have to do next and that they have opportunities to respond.
- Raise pupils' levels of attainment by:
  - building upon recent changes to Early Years Foundation Stage provision so that, in the longer term, the learning of Reception children is more consistent and rapid
  - ensuring that pupils make more consistently rapid progress and attain higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6
  - enabling pupils who are disabled or with special educational needs to make more rapid progress across the school.
- Improve the leadership and management of the school by ensuring that governors and school leaders accurately evaluate pupils' progress and attainment.
- Sustain current well-judged efforts to raise levels of attendance to be at least broadly average.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Reported outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage were low in 2012, and much lower than in 2011, indicating that these children had made inadequate progress from starting points which were at least in line with those expected.
- Recent changes have contributed to improved provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children receive a systematic grounding in the linking of sounds and letters (phonics) and now make steady progress in reading. Improved teaching and a more inspiring learning environment are enabling these children to begin to make up lost ground. They are now on track to leave Reception at levels closer to those expected.
- Although attainment by the end of Year 6 remains broadly average, teaching has strengthened in Years 5 and 6, promoting better achievement in those years. The progress of Year 6 pupils in mathematics in 2012 was more rapid than in English, particularly reading. Current Year 6 pupils are making generally good progress, particularly in mathematics. The pace of progress is not quite as rapid in Years 3 and 4.
- Progress in reading has improved across the school following the introduction of compensatory phonics sessions for older pupils who whilst benefiting from intensive phonics teaching in Years 1 and 2 still required additional support. The monitoring of progress in reading has improved.
- Pupils' attainment by the end of Year 2 is generally above average. Outcomes are particularly high in reading, but closer to average in writing and mathematics. Attainment by the end of Year 6 is on track to be broadly average in 2013. The higher level of pupil mobility in Years 3 to 6 has, in the past, adversely affected outcomes, although there has also been some weak teaching in the recent past.
- Few pupils are eligible for the pupil premium. In 2012, the attainment of eligible pupils in Year 2 was significantly ahead of that of the others. The attainment of eligible pupils in Year 6 was two terms below that of other pupils. However, these pupils made better progress over time than did the majority. The school has evidence of the good progress, both academically and socially, of current eligible pupils.
- The achievement of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs varies from class to class, but is not consistently good. The recently appointed coordinator is reviewing the effectiveness of different support staff, the way in which they are deployed and of the particular interventions used, with a view to increasing the impact of additional provision.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Despite the efforts of school leaders, the impact of teaching in Reception has been erratic. In the recent past, teaching has not ensured that children make consistently good progress. Some aspects of Early Years Foundation Stage practice, including an appropriately organised outdoor learning environment, had not been well established. Recent changes, although not yet fully embedded, have stabilised the quality of teaching. There have been recent efforts to improve the quality of assessment and to develop further specific areas within the classroom which promote children's learning in, for example, mathematics, and which enable them to make choices for themselves. Current assessment practice has recently been judged accurate by the

local authority.

- Across the school, teaching has improved, leading to more sustained progress by pupils. However, this is only just beginning to lift standards by the end of Year 6. Teachers do not always set high enough standards for the quality of pupils' written work in subjects other than literacy and numeracy.
- The checking and supporting of pupils' progress have improved. Many pupils know what level they are working at and where they need to focus their efforts. There is some effective marking of writing in Year 2 which provides a good model for others. That said, other than in Years 5 and 6, there is little written evidence of individual targets or the progress pupils have made. The marking of pupils' work occasionally indicates what they need to do next, but opportunities for pupils to respond to marking, or to evaluate their own work, are few.
- The teaching of pupils eligible for the pupil premium generally enables these pupils to make progress and reach standards at least in line with the others.
- Teaching is best in Years 1 and 2. In an outstanding literacy lesson in Year 2, pupils were making final preparations to write an African folk-tale, the culmination of their week's writing activity. The teacher set a rapid pace which engaged pupils' enthusiasm well. She acknowledged the quality of their language. The lesson was challenging, but pitched at the correct level for each group.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs learn at a similar pace to the others. However, progress has been variable. Pupils' needs, and the skills and deployment of support staff, are being reviewed, in order to accelerate further the progress of these pupils.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- Pupils' behaviour is often exemplary. They are consistently respectful, courteous and well mannered. Pupils are mostly enthusiastic about their learning, although they occasionally disengage when lessons lack challenge. All parents and carers who expressed a view feel that behaviour is good.
- The school has clear procedures to tackle the rare instances of poor behaviour. Staff manage behaviour well. There have been no recent exclusions and few recent racist incidents.
- Pupils have no concerns about their safety and feel that behaviour is good. They are confident that adults will respond to any concerns and that issues will be resolved promptly.
- Pupils understand that bullying may take different forms. There are no recent recorded instances of bullying. Relationships across the age groups are positive and supportive.
- Pupils have a good awareness of risk, relating, for example, to road safety and the internet, and know how to ensure their safety in different circumstances. They have a good awareness of the risks arising from social networking sites.
- Attendance is currently below average. The school has taken steps to reverse the recent downward trend and this is beginning to have an impact. Most pupils arrive punctually.

**The leadership and management** requires improvement

- Despite achieving short-term improvements, school leaders have not, until recently, managed to address weaknesses in Early Years Foundation Stage, leading to sustainably good provision. Procedures for the improvement of teaching in that phase have not in the past been consistently effective.
- School leaders analyse data thoroughly. However, the evaluation of information in school documents, including governors' reports, often presents an over-positive view of school performance.
- The headteacher has established generally effective systems to monitor the school's work. These efforts have facilitated many improvements in pupils' learning, particularly in reading and mathematics. Recent changes in Early Years Foundation Stage are beginning to have a positive impact on provision. There is strength in the commitment of current middle leaders, who are knowledgeable, keen to improve pupils' learning and can demonstrate an increasing impact.
- The school receives low-level support from its local authority, reflecting the view that school leaders have the capacity to implement appropriate improvements.
- School leaders have a close knowledge of the impact of pupil premium funding. This funding is now contributing to more rapid progress in literacy and numeracy.
- The school has focused on improving pupils' basic skills in literacy and numeracy. The curriculum has been regularly reviewed, offering a range of themes and topics. While the depth of coverage of some subjects is not extensive, with science limited in some years, there are undoubted strengths, such as the promotion of design and technology and of music. A wide range of out-of-school activities, including a residential visit, enhances pupils' enjoyment.
- Provision for pupils' social and moral development is good overall. Spiritual development is supported through good church links. However, while pupils experience other cultures through the curriculum, multicultural awareness is not yet strongly promoted.
- Links with parents and carers are generally good, although, until recently, there have been few opportunities for parents and carers to contribute to children's learning in Reception.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governance has many strengths. Governors undertake regular training and understand their role well. They are rigorous in their scrutiny of many aspects of the management of the school and have taken a lead recently in the school's efforts to improve attendance. In discussion, governors demonstrate that have a good knowledge of the school's effectiveness and they are increasingly confident and realistic in evaluating information relating to the quality of teaching and its impact upon pupils' performance, comparing outcomes to national performance data. However, the evaluation of standards and progress, as set out in governors' minutes, is sometimes overly positive in tone, leading to a potential lack of clarity as to the school's key priorities. Governors recognise the need to ensure equality of opportunity, to tackle discrimination and to foster good relationships. They are now more rigorous in ensuring that pay and promotion are firmly linked to teachers' effectiveness. They manage the budget well and evaluate decisions about the use of pupil premium funding, although a modest sum in this school, to close gaps in pupils' achievement. Governors ensure, along with senior leaders, that safeguarding arrangements meet national requirements.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	114938
<b>Local authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	412335

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	148
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Liz Cooke
<b>Headteacher</b>	Penny Bennett
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	6 July 2009
<b>Telephone number</b>	01277 363761
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