

# Homer First School

Testwood Road, Windsor, SL4 5RL

**Inspection dates** 9–10 May 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
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 and improving progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Progress in reading is good for the majority of pupils. They quickly develop the skills to read, grow to enjoy reading and use these skills to help them learn and achieve high standards as they move through the school.
- Teaching is good across the school. Positive relationships between teachers and pupils, clear guidance and challenging tasks support the good progress most pupils make.
- Teachers work well with support staff to make sure that pupils needing extra help are identified early and receive effective support. As a result gaps between the progress made by different groups of pupils are closing fast.
- Pupils' behaviour is good in lessons and around the school and they feel safe. Almost all pupils are eager to learn. Staff throughout the school model courtesy and respect very well.
- The two recently appointed co-headteachers have successfully led the school through a period of earlier instability to gain the confidence of parents and carers, pupils, staff and governors.
- They have built a cohesive and focused school community committed to the highest levels of success for pupils at this school.
- Governors know the school well. They support and rigorously challenge school leaders about how well the school is improving, and what more needs to be done.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- Progress in writing and mathematics is not as consistently good as it is in reading because there are too few opportunities to write at length and use their learning in mathematics in other subjects.
- There is not enough outstanding teaching because teachers do not give pupils enough opportunities to be involved in deciding how they want to develop their work and to show their learning.
- In some lessons teachers also do not ask questions that help pupils to think deeply about their learning, or to discuss their ideas to develop them further.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 13 lessons, including five joint observations with senior leaders and observations of pupils receiving additional support. In addition, the inspection team examined pupils' work in their books and listened to pupils read.
- Meetings were held with a group of pupils, governors, senior and middle leaders and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 76 parental responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), 11 letters from parents and carers, the school's own parental survey and the 19 staff questionnaires returned to the inspection team.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at documentation, including policies and improvement plans, and documentation relating to staff development, pupils' achievement, teaching, the curriculum, behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

## Inspection team

Mehar Brar, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Juliet Ward

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Homer First School is an average-sized first school.
- The proportion of girls is below the national average but numbers vary across year groups.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium (additional funding provided for looked after children, pupils eligible for free school meals and children of service families) is below average.
- Most pupils in the school are of White British heritage. The rest of the pupils are from a range of minority ethnic groups.
- The proportion of pupils learning English as an additional language is slightly above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by school action is average, and the proportion of pupils at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well below average.
- The governing body manages a breakfast club. Parents and carers have access to an after-school club managed by, and situated at, a local secondary school, which was not part of this inspection
- The school meets the current government's floor standards, which set the minimum requirements for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Since the last inspection there have been a number of changes in headship. The two current co-headteachers were appointed as acting headteachers from September 2011, and formally appointed as co-headteachers in May 2012.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that more of it is outstanding and accelerates the rate of pupils' progress by:
  - increasing opportunities for pupils to produce written work of greater length and use what they are learning about mathematics in more of the topics taught across the school
  - using questioning in lessons to deepen and extend pupils' understanding of the key ideas being taught and to provide more opportunities for them to discuss their ideas
  - giving pupils more opportunities to develop the skills of independent learning so that they are able to decide how they want to approach and develop their work, and also how to show what they have learnt.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Children enter Reception with skills and abilities at below the levels expected for their age. By the end of Reception they have made good progress and are working at expected levels. Pupils continue to make good progress through to the end of Year 4.
- Most pupils reach the standards expected for their age by the end of Year 4 and increasing numbers exceed expectations. Standards are above average now and improving, but still higher in reading than in writing, where opportunities are missed to promote and extend skills across some aspects of the curriculum, as with mathematics.
- An improved focus on disabled pupils and those with special educational needs means that their needs are identified earlier and they are provided with effective support. Teachers and support staff work well together to meet these pupils' needs through support in class and small-group teaching. As a result the gap between the standards reached by these pupils and the rest of the school has closed considerably.
- Pupils who receive support funded by the pupil premium achieve as expected when compared with schools nationally. They are working at levels one month behind their peers in reading and writing, and two months behind in mathematics, compared to the rest of the school. This difference is closing because the school has a better system of checking the progress being made by individual pupils and providing them with the support they need to continue learning well.
- Pupils from minority ethnic groups and those who have English as an additional language make similar progress to other pupils in the school. There is no difference in the progress made by boys and girls and pupils who join the school at other than the usual times.
- Opportunities to speak at length to share and develop ideas are too often not sufficient to accelerate learning.
- The school is committed to providing every pupil with an equal opportunity to achieve at the highest level possible. The rates of pupils' progress and the standards they are reaching are improving for all pupils.

### The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching is consistently good across the school and clearly supports pupils' progress. The teaching of reading is effective throughout the school, and the teaching of writing and mathematics is improving because the school has made these areas priorities.
- All lessons are supported by positive relationships between teachers and pupils and between pupils themselves. Teachers are clear about what they want pupils to be able to learn, they give clear instructions and include a variety of challenging activities in their lessons. They work closely with support staff to provide extra help for those pupils who need it, and to help all pupils make the best use of the time available in lessons.
- Teaching in the Reception classes helps children settle quickly into the routines of school. Classrooms provide attractive learning environments. Teachers use praise skilfully to encourage children and clear guidance to improve the accuracy of what is learnt. As a result children respond well by beginning to read, write and count, developing confidence in their abilities and learning with their friends.
- This good progress continues into Years 1 and 2 due to the continued good teaching. At the end of Year 1, the school's results in the phonics check (how well pupils can recognise the letters and sounds that make words) are above the average for other schools across the country. As they move into Years 3 and 4 pupils become increasingly confident, teachers guide them well about how to improve their work and teaching continues to support good progress.
- Pupils' progress is not always as quick as they are capable of because teachers do not use questioning skilfully enough to promote discussion and deepening of the key ideas that pupils

are learning. Pupils are also not always given enough opportunities to write at length or responsibility to learn to make decisions about how they want to develop their work or show their learning.

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

- Pupils' behaviour is good. Staff, the pupils themselves and the vast majority of parents and carers rightly believe that pupils feel safe in school and that they are well behaved in lessons and around the school. Pupils understand the importance of learning and, when given the opportunity to do so, they learn with interest, determination and enthusiasm.
- Pupils are well behaved at all times. Courtesy and respect are well modelled by all staff in the school. As a result, pupils learn well and play well together. They are considerate to the feelings of others and as a result incidents of bullying or any prejudice-driven behaviour are very rare.
- Attendance by all groups of pupils is securely average. Staff work hard to help pupils enjoy coming to school. Pupils make good friendships and enjoy learning from the clubs, visits and activities the school provides.
- Pupils feel safe in school. They know that any concerns or worries will be dealt with quickly and effectively by their teachers. They learn how to keep themselves safe because the school helps them to understand, for example, the importance of fire drills, being safe around people they do not know and using the internet safely.

### **The leadership and management** are good

- Leaders at all levels, and staff throughout the school, work as a committed and cohesive team. After a period of instability in the leadership of the school, the recently appointed two co-headteachers lead by example. High-quality professional relationships and a strong belief in the abilities of staff and pupils to work together and succeed have been made the central drivers for school improvement.
- The vast majority of parents and carers share this sense of common purpose and along with the inspectors, they too recognise the hard work of school leaders and the staff, and the continually improving education provided for their children. Numerous parents and carers shared this view by specifically writing to the inspection team.
- School leaders plan effectively, making good reference to their monitoring and evaluation. Their checks on how well the school is doing are accurate. Teachers' targets for improvement are specifically linked to improvements in pupils' progress. School leaders recognise that pupils' progress is not always used as a central measure of success when planning and judging the impact of their work. Similarly the emphasis on what pupils know and can do better is not always detailed sufficiently when judging the quality of teaching to make it clear to staff how they can improve.
- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural education of the pupils is a central feature of all aspects of the school. The curriculum is having a good impact on developing the important skills of reading, writing and mathematics. The school uses outdoor learning, trips and visitors to enhance experiences for pupils. Staff also promote a sense of responsibility by their own conduct, and opportunities, such as those provided by the school's link with a school in Lebanon, help widen pupils' understanding of the world.
- The local authority provides regular advice and challenge, and has helped this school successfully come through a period of instability. Training provided for school leaders and governors on key areas, such as financial management, safeguarding, health and safety and effective leadership, have supported the school well.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors are committed and active members of the school community. They are knowledgeable about issues that are relevant to the performance of the school, and are supported with this through training by the local authority. They challenge and support the

school by, for example, ensuring that curriculum leaders understand their roles and can demonstrate improvements in pupils' learning. Their accurate knowledge of strengths and weaknesses in the quality of teaching is based on regular visits to the school, comprehensive and clear information provided by the co-headteachers and on interrogation of national data. Governors confirm that the progress of pupils receiving extra support through the pupil premium is improving and now close to that made by other pupils in the school because they have checked pupils' assessment records. They also ensure that performance management and staff progression on the salary scales are linked to the impact of teaching on pupils' progress.

## 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>	109873
<b>Local authority</b>	Windsor and Maidenhead
<b>Inspection number</b>	413461

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

<b>Type of school</b>	First
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–9
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	218
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Ms Jacqui Doling
<b>Headteacher</b>	Miss Vicky Brand (Co-Headteacher) Mrs Gemma Sharma (Co-Headteacher)
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	24 March 2009
<b>Telephone number</b>	01753 867436
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