

Halling Primary School

Howlsmere Close, Rochester, ME2 1ER

Inspection dates 21–22 May 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	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		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Pupils' achievements in mathematics, though improving, are not yet firmly established or high enough.
- The quality of teaching, though improving rapidly, is not yet consistent across the school.
- Teachers do not always ensure that pupils understand how they can improve the quality of their work.

The school has the following strengths

- Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage because of the good teaching that they receive. They are well prepared for Year 1.
- Teaching in Key Stage 2 is effective and meets pupils' needs well.
- The strong leadership of the headteacher, other senior leaders and governors has rapidly enhanced the quality of teaching. Pupils' outcomes are improving as a result.
- The school promotes a caring attitude and high expectations of behaviour. As a result, pupils' behaviour is consistently good. They are courteous and look after each other. Pupils feel safe and speak highly of their school.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors saw teaching across the school. They observed one assembly, 13 lessons and pupils' behaviour in the playground. Most lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- Discussions were held with pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body, the headteacher, staff and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors observed many aspects of the school's work, including supervision and support for pupils who need extra help. They examined pupils' work in their exercise books and on classroom and corridor wall displays, and heard groups of pupils read.
- The inspectors looked at a number of documents including lesson plans, plans for the school's future development, the school's arrangements for keeping pupils safe, pupils' attendance records, minutes of governing body meetings, records of how pupils' learning is checked and tracked and records of how the quality of teaching is checked.
- The views of parents were taken into account through taking note of the responses to the on-line Parent View survey and letters that were submitted.
- Staff views were taken into consideration by looking at questionnaires completed by staff members and discussions with several members of staff.

Inspection team

Steven Popper, Lead inspector

Seconded Inspector

Janice Howkins

Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

Information about this school

- The school is a slightly smaller than average primary school which serves the village of Halling and the surrounding area.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set out the minimum expectations of pupils' attainment and the progress they make.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for additional government funding, known as the 'pupil premium', is lower than the national average.
- The proportions of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs and who need extra help are lower than in other schools nationally. Some of these pupils have speech, language and communication needs while others have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. Very few pupils have statements of special educational needs.
- Almost all pupils are of White British heritage.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage have a Reception class provided for them.
- The deputy headteacher became the headteacher in May 2010. A deputy headteacher was appointed in May 2011.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to raise the attainment of pupils in mathematics.
- Raise the quality of teaching in Key Stage 1 to match the quality of teaching found in Key Stage 2 and the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Improve the feedback given to pupils so that they know how to make progress against their targets, especially in Key Stage 1.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Children do well in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Several start school with skills that are lower than expected for their age but make good progress in all areas of their learning as they move through the Reception year. All children achieve well by the time they join Year 1.
- Results of national screening in phonics (linking letters to the sounds they make) and national tests in writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1 have been lower than in most schools. Recent improvements to the quality of teaching mean that pupils in Key Stage 1 have begun to make more progress in these areas than they did previously, and these improvements need to be sustained.
- Pupils make progress in all subjects throughout Key Stage 2. Results of national tests in Year 6 have varied since 2009 but are now improving. In the most recent tests most Year 6 pupils met the expected standards in reading and writing, and a greater proportion of pupils than in most other schools achieved the higher levels in reading. Pupils' standards in mathematics were slightly lower than those in most other schools but show improvement over previous years. This upwards trend needs to be continued.
- Pupils receiving support through the use of pupil premium funding generally make progress in line with all pupils in the school, though the rate of progress is variable across different year groups. Average point scores in English and mathematics show that any gaps in performance are closing. This is partly because of the targeted support they receive from a teaching assistant paid for by pupil premium funding.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make progress from their starting points. This is because the school monitors their progress effectively and provides extra teaching support where it will do most good.
- Pupils demonstrate a love of reading and talk about the books they read with enthusiasm. Pupils are heard to read regularly and the books they read are matched to their needs and abilities.
- Pupils made good progress during the great majority of lessons seen during the inspection. This was because they found their lessons interesting.
- Pupils present much of their work to a good standard because of their teachers' high expectations during lessons. However, the front covers of their books are scruffy in appearance and work against the promotion of a higher standard of presentation.
- Most parents express positive views about the achievements and progress made by pupils at the school. Pupils are proud of their achievements and quality of their learning.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching across the school is not yet of a consistently high standard. The strongest teaching is seen in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 2. The quality of teaching in Key Stage 1 has risen over the past year, but it is not yet as consistently effective as that found in other parts of the school.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage features a well-judged and effective mix of child-led learning and direct teaching. Activities and support are well matched to children's needs and abilities and children make good progress as a result.
- The best teaching seen in the rest of the school featured high expectations of pupils' learning. It enabled pupils to work together effectively and share their ideas and discoveries with each other. Teachers and teaching assistants used skilful questioning to deepen pupils' thinking and check their understanding. Teachers were knowledgeable and enthusiastic about their subjects and their enthusiasm and attention to detail rubbed off onto the pupils. For example, one Years 5/6 lesson about editing letters stimulated pupils to read their pieces of writing very expressively and with high levels of enjoyment and pride in their improved work. This lesson featured

learning of substantial quality.

- The less effective teaching seen, particularly in Key Stage 1, did not excite pupils or retain their attention in the same way. In these lessons some pupils lost focus when working without support and their learning became slower, leading to insufficient progress being made.
- All teachers offer pupils feedback that identifies the strengths of their work. Some teachers, particularly those in Key Stage 2, give pupils clear advice about how they can improve their work, but this is variable, especially in the written feedback that pupils receive. As a result, pupils do not always know how to make progress against their targets, especially in Key Stage 1.
- Homework is used effectively to practise skills and apply knowledge. Pupils interviewed by the inspectors said that they enjoyed their lessons and felt supported and helped by their teachers.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to their learning and high expectations of their own learning and behaviour. They are attentive and willing to learn, and only lose focus when the teaching they receive is less effective.
- The school promotes consideration of others and high expectations of behaviour. The learning environment promotes pupils' responsibilities to one another and the valuing of other people's feelings and achievements through the messages on display. Pupils demonstrate care for others. This was witnessed during an assembly and in a discussion with pupils when they talked excitedly about charity work they were involved in.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons, in the playground and when travelling around the school is of a very high standard. They are courteous and well mannered at all times. Relationships between pupils and adults and pupils and other pupils are very good, and there is a high degree of respectfulness consistently on display. Pupils are particularly skilled at working together, as witnessed through the way they co-operated with their learning partners in many lessons.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe. They understand different types of bullying (including cyber-bullying) and extreme behaviour such as racism, though pupils are clear that 'this is a no-bullying school'.
- The school operates an effective behaviour management system that gives pupils clear signals when their behaviour needs improving. Careful monitoring of behaviour and the promotion of high behavioural expectations ensure a good climate for learning and the absence of any low-level disruption.
- Parents and staff are positive about behaviour and raise no serious concerns. A high percentage of parents who expressed an opinion thought that behaviour in the school was good.
- Pupils feel very safe in the school and feel that bullying and other forms of poor behaviour do not exist in the school. Their opinion is supported by the school's records on behaviour.
- Attendance is in line with most other schools. However, the school does not keep methodical records of the attendance of different groups of pupils.
- Pupils enjoy school and make comments such as, 'We love being here'.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, senior leaders and governors have high aspirations for the school and its pupils. Expectations of pupils' achievement have risen and are now shared across the school, and staff have been effectively re-deployed with the result that the school's capacity for sustained improvement has been strengthened considerably. The school now pursues excellence at all times.
- The quality of teaching is now monitored systematically and effectively. As a result the weakest teaching has been eradicated and pupils are beginning to make more progress, with improved outcomes predicted for this academic year.
- Senior leaders have an accurate knowledge of the quality of teaching across the school and its

impact on pupils' progress and achievement. The school's evaluation of its strengths and priorities for development is accurate. Improvement planning, performance management and decisions about pay awards to staff are explicitly linked to targets relating to improvements in the quality of teaching and in pupils' results and progress.

- The school provides good opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through the broad range of subjects taught and in additional experiences, such as forest school and involvement in raising money for charities. Displays around the school demonstrate how the school promotes the valuing of people's experiences and perspectives. One lesson taught in the Early Years Foundation Stage engaged the children in a song about being polite in a way that also promoted good turn-taking.
- Pupil premium funding is spent wisely and in a way that secures the progress of pupils who receive such funding. For example, the school employs a teaching assistant to work with these pupils should they need extra support in reading, writing or mathematics.
- The school ensures that all pupils are safe. It keeps appropriate and up-to-date records of its work in this area and meets statutory requirements.
- The local authority has actively supported the school's drive for improvement. It has supplied advisory support, training for governors and financial assistance, all of which have contributed towards the improvements made to the school's tracking of pupils' progress and attainment and the quality of teaching in the school.
- The headteacher and school leadership team have the well-founded confidence of the school's governing body, the local authority, the great majority of parents and all of the staff.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are active and capable. They offer a good level of challenge to the school, especially focused around the improvement of academic standards and the quality of teaching, which they scrutinise through systematic observations of teaching and learning. Governors set the headteacher performance management targets that accurately reflect the key priorities of the school. They ensure the efficient management of financial resources, including the effective use of pupil premium funding. Their impact on the school's drive for improvement is good.

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	118326
Local authority	Medway
Inspection number	399696

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	237
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mark Tickner
Headteacher	Wendy Donnelly
Date of previous school inspection	1–2 February 2012
Telephone number	01634 240258
Fax number	01634 241552
Email address	donnw001@medway.org.uk

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