

Hertford Heath Primary and Nursery School

Woodland Road, Hertford Heath, Hertford, SG13 7QW

Inspection dates 22–23 May 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

- Teaching across the school from the Nursery to Year 6 is consistently good.
- All pupils, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, make good progress because teachers have high expectations of what they are able to do.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes towards school and enjoy their learning.
- Pupils attend regularly and behave well, they are polite to staff, each other and visitors.
- The school uses additional funding effectively to raise standards, especially for pupils eligible for the pupil premium.
- Pupils have a good understanding of safety, especially when using the internet
- Leaders and managers, including the governing body, have brought about improvements to make sure that pupils make good progress and teaching is consistently good.
- The pupils' enjoyment of the subjects they are taught is developed through a variety of topics, themes and after-school activities, which provide a broad range of experiences.
- The school promotes a strong sense of community by involving the pupils in the many facets of village life including visits to local churches and writing letters to the local council.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Progress in writing is not yet as rapid as it is in reading because pupils do not have enough opportunities to write at length across different subjects.
- Progress in mathematics is not always consistent across the school because marking in some classes does not show pupils how to improve their work or encourage them to respond to teachers' comments
- Some elements of the role of subject leaders are not fully developed.
- Sometimes in lessons the balance between teaching and pupils' independent learning is not quite right and pupils have too little time to complete work.'

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in each class. They visited 10 lessons and observed all teachers.
- Joint observations were conducted with the headteacher.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' books, a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and school improvement plan.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read, met with different groups of pupils and talked to several members of staff.
- The views of 48 parents taken from the on-line questionnaire Parent View were considered and also communications by email

Inspection team

Gillian Bosschaert, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Noureddin Khassal

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who are supported through school action is above average, but the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- Most of the pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium funding is below the national average. This is additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, those in local authority care and pupils with a parent in the armed services.
- There is a breakfast club and after-school club managed by the governing body.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress for pupils at the end of Year 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Move achievement and teaching to outstanding by:
 - accelerating pupils' progress in writing through giving them more opportunities to write at length and across subjects.
 - making sure that the marking of mathematics consistently shows pupils how to improve their work and gives them opportunities to respond to teachers' advice
 - giving pupils enough time in lessons to complete their independent work.
- Strengthen the role of subject leaders by giving them more opportunities to monitor their phases and subjects including through the use of whole-school data

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children join the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and knowledge that is below the levels expected for their age especially in communication and numeracy. The children settle quickly and make good progress especially in physical and communication skills due to good teaching. Standards have improved so that when children leave the Reception class they are broadly average.
- The good progress is maintained throughout the school. By the time pupils reach the end of Year 6 pupils have met standards expected for their age and over half have exceeded the standards in reading and mathematics. Writing has not developed at the same rate because there are too few opportunities to write at length and across subjects, but the school is aware of this and has put in place strategies to bring about rapid improvement. Evidence from books shows this improvement in writing is consistent across the school.
- The teaching of reading is particularly good across the school. Phonics, (the sounds that letters make) is taught well and younger children use this knowledge to help them sound out unfamiliar words successfully. Pupils enjoy reading and are able to discuss confidently what they read at home.
- Mathematics dipped last year but this was due to pupils eligible to sit the papers being on a pre-booked residential educational visit when the Level 6 papers were given out to pupils nationally. The cohort was one with several pupils who were well below average on entry. The school spent time developing personal, social, emotional awareness in order for them to have better attitudes to learning and achieve as well as pupils nationally. Several Year 6 have taken the Level 6 papers this year.
- Pupil-premium funding is used well to target support for individuals and small groups of pupils who need extra help with the result that progress has improved and they are now five terms behind their peers in English and mathematics and the gap is getting smaller.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress because
- one-to-one support or small-group teaching helps them to catch up. This is very closely monitored by the school leaders and results show that these pupils make progress in line with their peers and sometimes better

The quality of teaching is good

- All the teaching is consistently good across the school and, as a result, pupils make good progress by the end of Year 6. This is because teachers ensure that the work is suitable for every child's needs and that some of the work, for the more-able pupils, is more difficult.
- Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Pupils have very well developed collaborative working skills and are keen to cooperate and complete tasks. For example, in a Year 5 class pupils were finding the definitions of technical words to help their poetry writing, words such as onomatopoeia, similes and metaphors. This necessitated pupils moving around the classroom talking to others and then teaming up to offer the definition. They did this sensibly and without fuss.

- In another lesson on seed dispersal the teacher used skilful and effective questioning to get the pupils to think and eventually come up with their own reasons for why fruit is delicious to eat and how seeds get moved around away from the mother plant.
- Teachers use marking to allow pupils to see what they have done well and what they need to do to improve. However, this is not yet developed fully in all classes, especially in mathematics, as pupils do not always know how to improve their work or have the time to respond to their teachers' comments.
- Teachers and classroom assistants move around the groups of pupils well making sure that they fully understand, offering support and guidance when necessary. This encourages pupils to work harder and gives them opportunities to celebrate their successes. However, in some lessons there is an imbalance between direct teaching and independent work with the result that pupils have little time to finish work.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils have a very positive attitude to their learning. They show a willingness to take part in discussions and are keen to answer questions. They are able to work cooperatively in small groups and show a readiness to respond to adult guidance and advice. This is because there are strong relationships which contribute toward the values the school places on being a learning community.
- Most pupils are considerate and very supportive of one another, which was seen in lessons when 'talk partners' were used and by the 'buddy' system where pupils are paired with other pupils. There are some children who show challenging behaviour but this is well managed by teachers and classroom assistants and does not cause disruption to lessons.
- Year 6 'young leaders' support behaviour in the playground by organising games to be played with the younger pupils three times a week. They are enthusiastic about this responsibility and it helps to promote and reinforce the good behaviour and positive attitudes seen in the classrooms.
- The school council provides the mechanism for all groups of pupils to have a strong voice. Following concerns raised about parents parking outside the school they took it upon themselves to write to two local publicans to seek permission for parents to park in their car parks at the beginning and end of the school day. Permission was granted and the problem has improved.
- Parents are very positive about behaviour in the school. Almost all who responded to Parent View said that the pupils behave well and that their child was safe in school. Pupils were very keen to explain about how to stay safe, especially safety on the internet, displaying a sound knowledge of what to do if they felt threatened by emails or the internet. They say bullying is rare and school logs support this.
- Attendance is above average. Pupils attend regularly and are punctual. This is because they enjoy school. 'School is fun,' said one young pupil.

The leadership and management are good

- The leaders and managers of the school make a strong team. Everyone is valued and opinions accepted. The headteacher and her new deputy have rightly focused on improving the quality of teaching and raising standards. They have high expectations that have been communicated successfully. All teaching is good and standards are rising.
- Effective systems ensure that teachers are accountable for the progress of pupils in their class. Regular checks are made on teaching. Training is given to all staff, including classroom assistants, to improve their practice.
- The introduction of programmes to raise standards in writing and mathematics have brought about improvements. For example, the use of extended writing books in Key stage 2 on alternate weeks in order to give pupils time to correct, edit and extend their work is beginning to show greater improvement in writing. Numeracy skills practised daily have improved pupils' number work and given them instant recall to basic facts.
- Pupils learn other subjects and practise their literacy and numeracy skills through topics and themes. The pupils enjoy trips to activity camps, participate in a dance festival and have access to weekly extra music lessons providing a rich basis for learning.
- Good links have been established with local schools with the result that the school has been able to organise visits from authors and illustrators at joint ventures. The school has also been able to access additional sports facilities and competitions using these venues.
- The school's self-evaluation is accurate and the school-improvement plan sets out the right priorities for improvement. These include improving teaching and raising standards.
- The school implements an effective policy for promoting equal opportunities and tackles any instances of negative discrimination.
- Subject leaders and managers with whole school responsibility are knowledgeable about their subjects and have initiated training for all staff and governors but have had little opportunity to measure the impact of the training in the classroom. Some are unfamiliar with whole-school data although they fully understand data for their own classes.
- The local authority offers its standard support to the school and visits three times per year. The school improvement partner has been involved in the headteacher's performance management targets and has, at the request of the school, observed in classrooms. The recent whole-school review accurately highlighted priorities for the next term.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are very knowledgeable about the school and have a strong understanding of the areas for improvement and the need to both support and challenge the school management. They know about the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. Training undertaken by individual governors is shared with the whole governing body. Recent 'critical friend' training has enabled all governors to appreciate the need to look at pupils' progress, not just the end of year test results. They know about targets that are set for teachers to improve their teaching and what is being done to reward good teaching and tackle any underperformance. Finances are secure. Governors understand how pupil-premium funding is spent and are aware of its impact. Safeguarding meets 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

Unique reference number	117125
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	413124

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	218
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Suzanne Dixon
Headteacher	Janice Smith
Date of previous school inspection	22 March 2010
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