

# Hurst Drive Primary School

Hurst Drive, Waltham Cross, Hertfordshire, EN8 8DH

**Inspection dates** 26–27 June 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		Requires improvement	3
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

- Standards in both English and mathematics are below average. The progress pupils make in both subjects is too uneven; while some pupils make rapid progress, those making too little are not always identified quickly.
- Not enough teaching is consistently good enough to drive learning forward at the speed needed for the pupils to make good progress and so raise their attainment. Teachers do not consistently plan for, or set out, the next steps in pupils' learning.
- In spite of action taken by the school, boys are not reaching the same standards as girls in their writing. There are insufficient opportunities planned to develop boys' writing in Reception and, elsewhere, writing tasks do not engage or interest boys sufficiently.
- Support staff are not always deployed effectively to have the maximum impact on learning. This is particularly the case in lessons to develop phonics (the links between letters and the sounds they make).
- Formal procedures for managing the performance of teachers have not been used well enough by leaders in the past to drive up the quality of teaching and the pupils' achievement.
- Governors are not demanding enough of the school and do not check its performance with sufficient care.

### The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher is now taking decisive steps to tackle declining attainment and putting in place more robust systems for improving teaching.
- The school has successfully raised the rate of progress of pupils eligible for the pupil premium so that the gap in their attainment with others has closed considerably.
- Pupils are polite and well-mannered. When teaching is interesting and challenging they work hard and listen carefully to their teachers.
- Governors make sure all staff follow legal requirements for looking after the pupils. As a result, pupils feel safe and are confident that there is someone to turn to if they are worried about anything.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 23 lessons or parts of lessons, five of which were seen together with the senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, school staff, members of the governing body including the Chair and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 13 responses to the online parent questionnaire (Parent View) and held informal discussions with parents at the start of the school day.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school's own information on the pupils' current progress, planning and monitoring documentation, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and documents relating to safeguarding.
- Inspectors also listened to the reading of a sample of pupils in Years 1 and 2.

## Inspection team

Martin Beale, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Hermione Horn	Additional Inspector
Alison Moore	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is larger than the majority of primary schools. Pupil numbers are rising as it expands to take in two forms of entry each year.
- The majority of the pupils are from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion who speak English as an additional language is well above average, although few are at an early stage of learning English when they enter the school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for funding through the pupil premium is well above average. This is extra money given to schools for looked after children, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children of service families.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is low.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average. Their needs are varied.
- Half of the pupils in Key Stage 2 are currently taught in mixed-age classes although this will fall as larger year groups move up the school.
- 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?

- Increase the proportion of good and outstanding teaching so that pupils make more rapid progress by ensuring:
  - teachers consistently plan lessons that meet the learning needs of all pupils and set out the next steps in their learning
  - the teaching of phonics is improved across the school, and particularly in the case of pupils who find reading difficult
  - support staff are deployed more effectively so that they have the maximum impact on pupils' learning at all times.
- Improve the standard of boys' writing by:
  - ensuring that opportunities for writing are provided regularly in Reception
  - identifying quickly any underachieving boys and putting in place effective programmes to increase their progress
  - identifying, in discussion with other schools, the kind of writing tasks and topics that engage and interest boys more.
- Strengthen the effectiveness of leadership, including that by governors, by:
  - using formal processes for managing the performance of teachers more effectively
  - undertaking an external review of the role of the governing body to determine how this aspect of leadership can be improved, and specifically to ensure that governors are better informed about how well the school is performing and do more to challenge senior leaders over its performance.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Although the recent decline in attainment has been halted and attainment is rising at both key stages, the progress of pupils still varies too much across the school for achievement to be judged consistently good. Year 6 test results in mathematics fell in 2011 and, in spite of an improvement in 2012, were below average last year, as were results in English.
- Children enter Reception with skills lower than those expected for their age. Teaching is not consistently effective enough to secure good progress and attainment is still below average by the time the children enter Year 1, particularly in literacy and numeracy. This is partly because not enough opportunities are provided for children to practise writing or to apply their number skills.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language make similar progress to their classmates, but teachers do not provide enough opportunities for them to engage in purposeful talk and discussion. In general, insufficient attention is paid to developing speaking skills in Reception and at Key Stage 1.
- Attainment in phonics (letters and the sounds they make) has risen this year but is still below average, with only just over a third of Year 1 pupils reaching the expected level. Older pupils, however, develop skills of research and comprehension well and reading for pleasure is supported effectively.
- Boys do not reach the same standards in their writing as girls. This is because they do not find the resources used stimulating and those underachieving are not picked up quickly enough for additional support. However, by Year 6, individual pupils are able to write in a wide range of styles and respond to well literature including works by Shakespeare.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make similar progress to the others. Their needs are carefully identified but support is not always adapted speedily to meet these needs when a new approach or additional support is necessary.
- The school is using the pupil premium well to provide additional support designed to close the gap between the attainment of eligible pupils and others through small group work. These pupils were roughly one year behind in English and slightly less in mathematics in Year 6 test results in 2012, but this gap has closed considerably and is now negligible.
- The progress of current pupils, particularly in Years 5 and 6 is improving. Pupils in the current Year 6 have made good progress at Key Stage 2 in English and mathematics so that more are judged to be working at and above levels expected for their age than in the recent past.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Teaching is improving but not enough is of the quality needed to enable pupils to make consistently good progress. There are various reasons for this, such as lessons not designed to pinpoint or address the next steps in each pupil's learning, the lack of activities to interest boys, particularly in writing and insufficient consistency the way phonics are taught across the school. At times teachers do not use their questions to check that everyone understands an answer

before moving on. Often additional adults are not as effective as they need to be, either in whole-class sessions or when working with small groups.

- Planning in Reception for child-led activities does not take enough account of individual learning needs, and adults do not always extend the children's learning through their questions. Sessions led directly by adults are more carefully planned and so move learning forward more rapidly. The changed layout of classrooms is also enabling children to undertake more practical learning than previously.
- There are examples of good practice and well-taught lessons across the school. In these cases, teachers have high expectations and challenge the pupils' thinking. They teach new ideas with confidence and set activities that interest pupils and drive their learning forward. A striking feature of these classrooms is the purposeful atmosphere they encourage, with pupils rising to the challenge and staying fully focused on their work.
- Marking has improved significantly in terms of the guidance it provides for pupils. Teachers make clear what pupils have done well and provide advice on how work can be improved. The headteacher has identified that more time is needed for pupils to respond to this advice. Discussions with their teacher are particularly helpful in clarifying for pupils how to improve their work and meet their individual targets.

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

### **requires improvement**

- Behaviour is not consistently good because some pupils lose concentration in lessons when teaching is not interesting or well-planned. A small number of pupils do not behave sensibly and with consideration for others at playtimes.
- Most pupils have positive attitudes to their learning and want to do well. They try hard to please their teachers, are attentive and are keen to participate in lessons by answering questions. The school is taking a firmer line over unauthorised absence but is not always supported by families. Consequently, attendance is slightly below the national average.
- The vast majority of pupils show respect for adults and are friendly towards other pupils. They move sensibly around the school and play happily together out of lessons. Pupils have a say in aspects of school life through their school council and show concern for the environment through their 'Green team'. Trained pupils act as 'peer mediators' and help to sort out problems when pupils fall out with each other.
- Pupils say they feel safe and learn how to identify bullying. They say it is not an issue as far as they are concerned and are confident that any incidents are quickly dealt with by adults. This is confirmed by school records showing infrequent bullying. Pupils are more concerned about occasional instances of disturbance to lessons and play caused by the thoughtless behaviour of a minority.

### **The leadership and management**

### **requires improvement**

- School leaders, staff and governors did not identify the decline in the pupils' achievement quickly enough and link it to the quality of teaching. Consequently, not enough had been done until recently to tackle weaknesses in teaching. Formal procedures for managing the performance of teachers have not demanded enough in terms of the progress pupils are expected to make in

their classes.

- The school's priority of securing equality of opportunity is not being fully realised because of the gender gap in writing. However, pupils are now set increasingly challenging targets and their progress is more carefully monitored. This enables programmes to be put in place where potential underachievement is identified. The school also supports families by linking closely with the adjacent children's centre and the local network of extended schools.
  - The headteacher has made clear to everyone that pupil progress must increase and that this will only be sustainable when teaching has reached at least a consistently good level. The action she has taken has halted the decline in attainment and is providing the school with the capacity to improve further. Teachers are encouraged to work more closely together to share their expertise and individual training put in place based on secure monitoring systems and accurate self-evaluation. Subject leaders have become more skilled and effective at leading improvements in their areas of responsibility.
  - The school's closer engagement with the local authority is enabling it to build greater leadership capacity. This has also led to the establishment of a close partnership with an outstanding school in the county, whose expertise is being used increasingly effectively to improve teaching.
  - There are strengths in the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They learn to value and respect cultural differences and are taught how not to tolerate racism. This reflects the school's determination to tackle any form of discrimination. Residential trips, including for Year 3 and 4 pupils help them learn how to get on with each other in unfamiliar situations.
  - The way subjects are organised and taught is continually under review. There is an appropriate focus on developing key skills of literacy and numeracy. Topic themes, often supported by educational visits add interest to the pupils' experiences by linking learning between subjects.
  - **The governance of the school:**
    - Governing body systems for checking on the impact of the school on the progress of pupils are not systematic enough. This means they do not have a clear enough picture of its performance or set challenging targets for its improvement. The governing body has bought into the local authority training programme and governors have received training on how to interpret assessment data. However, they did not act quickly enough to stem the decline in attainment until earlier this year. Governors are aware that teaching is not consistently good enough and the steps being taken by the headteacher to try and improve it. They are starting to receive more useful information than before on how finance is allocated including the pupil premium, but are not always aware of the full impact of spending decisions.
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## 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>	117180
<b>Local authority</b>	Hertfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	412949

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>	324
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Steve Panting
<b>Headteacher</b>	Tina Matthews
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	24 November 2009
<b>Telephone number</b>	01992 624099
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