

Hillhouse CofE Primary School

Ninefields Estate, Waltham Abbey, EN9 3EL

Inspection dates 2–3 July 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Too few pupils make better-than-expected progress and so achievement requires improvement.
- Although improving, teaching requires improvement. This is because lessons do not always develop pupils' skills methodically. This means that sometimes small parts of lessons do not focus sufficiently on the key objectives for learning.
- Checks are not always made partway through the lesson to see what all pupils have learnt.
- Some teaching does not set extra challenges for children that would encourage them to reach the next level of skill.
- Pupils are not involved effectively in collecting evidence that they have met their learning targets.
- Parents do not understand enough about how well their child is doing between parents' evenings.
- Leadership requires improvement because although governors are supportive some do not challenge leaders sufficiently about how much progress different groups of pupils are making.
- Teaching is monitored by leaders every three months but one or two staff do not show leaders that they have met their personal targets for improvement between these observations.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils who speak English as an additional language achieve well because of the good support they receive.
- Children make a good start in Reception because teaching and leadership are consistently good.
- Pupils in Year 1 performed well in the national reading check because the school teaches phonics (the sounds that letters make) well.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well and so they are thoughtful and polite young people.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. This is because staff give pupils effective levels of guidance.
- Pupils feel safe in school and parents and carers say their child is well looked after.
- Leaders work well with the local authority and others to improve the pupils' education.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 19 lessons or parts of lessons taught by nine teachers. Seven of the observations were carried out with the headteacher.
- Discussions were held with senior leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body, the Vice Chair of the Governing Body and two other governors, parents and carers, school staff, pupils and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour and scrutinised the school's safeguarding procedures. They heard some Year 1 and 6 pupils read. They scrutinised Year 6 pupils' work in books for literacy and mathematics.
- The inspectors took account of 28 responses to the online Parent View survey and a school survey completed by 33 parents in March this year. The questionnaires of 32 staff were also taken into account.
- The inspectors observed the work of the school and looked at documentation including teachers' planning, the school development plan, tracking documentation of pupils' progress, performance management arrangements and records of governing body meetings.

Inspection team

Jackie Cousins, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Maria Rees Johnson

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are White British. A small number are from minority ethnic backgrounds or are learning to speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is average but in the present Reception year an above-average proportion of children are eligible for free school meals. Generally this type of funding applies to a small number of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals. There were not enough pupils known to be eligible for free school meals in Year 6 in 2012 to comment on their attainment without identifying them.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and learning so that it is consistently good or better by making sure that:
 - each part of every lesson builds pupils' skills towards the learning objectives set
 - checks are made partway through the session to see what pupils have or have not learnt
 - all lessons set extra challenges which will inspire pupils to reach the next level of skill
 - all pupils are encouraged to gather evidence that they have met their learning targets.
- Develop pupils' achievement in all year groups so that more of them make better-than-expected progress each year by making sure that:
 - more challenging targets are set for the amount of progress pupils will make
 - all parents receive a short report between parents' evenings so that they know how much progress their child is making.
- Improve leadership and management by making sure that:
 - all staff and leaders are involved successfully in collecting evidence that staff have met their personal targets for improving teaching
 - all governors develop their skills effectively so that they can challenge the school about how much progress different groups of pupils are making.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- In 2012 achievement in English was significantly below average. In the past the school did not use its performance information to identify and support those pupils who were falling behind quickly enough. The headteacher and senior leaders are beginning to do this more successfully. Standards in Key Stage 2 were below average in reading, writing and mathematics as some pupils did not make the progress expected of them. Not enough pupils make better-than-expected progress because teaching is not consistently good.
- Teacher assessments and a scrutiny of books indicate that in 2013 the very large majority of Year 6 boys and girls are making nationally expected progress in English. This is a considerable improvement on last year. The school does not always make effective use of information about pupils falling behind to help them catch up rapidly.
- In 2012 pupils' achievement in mathematics in Key Stage 2 required improvement because not enough pupils reached higher levels of skill. This is because in the past the school did not set challenging enough targets for the amount of progress which each pupil will make every three months. In 2012 attainment did improve and this has been maintained this year.
- Pupils in Years 1 and 2, including those from minority ethnic groups, make nationally expected progress which is an improvement from last year and so their attainment is broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language achieve well because staff develop language skills carefully.
- Children join the Reception class with skills significantly below expectations but they make good progress and so their skills are broadly average by the time they start Year 1. Phonics are taught well and so children learn to read and write successfully.
- The progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs requires improvement because although the special educational needs coordinator checks to see if these programmes are working every six weeks. They are not adapted or changed totally effectively if they are not having a positive effect on pupils' skills.
- Throughout the school pupils who are supported by the pupil premium who have been at the school for more than two years make nationally expected progress. This is because progress meetings are used carefully to identify pupils who are eligible for free school meals and would benefit from further support and this is effectively used to help them.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because it does not challenge all groups of pupils in all lessons. For example, sometimes lessons do not set extension activities which will inspire pupils to reach the next level of skill. This means that at times more-able pupils are not extending their learning successfully.
- Lessons do not always build up pupils' skills effectively. As a result time is wasted because activities are not always chosen which will develop pupils' understanding in the best way. Sometimes checks are not made carefully enough partway through the lesson to see how well

pupils are developing their knowledge. This means that the lesson is not adapted to make sure that learning objectives are met for all pupils.

- The best teaching contains well-planned activities which use a range of strategies to promote pupils' knowledge and understanding of key and complex skills. In a good lesson Year 5 pupils talked about how to use persuasive language before they started to write. Specific feedback was given by the teacher and so pupils knew what they had done well. Marking was used successfully to make sure that pupils understood how to improve their work.
- The teaching of reading is given a high priority and phonics are taught systematically throughout the school. As a result in 2012 the proportion of pupils in Year 1 reaching the expected standards in the phonic screening was above average.
- Pupils are not involved effectively in checking whether they have met their learning targets in lessons and so they are not clear about whether they are successful or not. This is because staff do not suggest to them that they could collect examples of their work which show that they have achieved their learning targets.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils from all backgrounds get on well. This is because the leadership includes all pupils effectively in school life and treats them all equally fairly.
- Pupils respect others' thoughts and ideas. They get on successfully when they work in pairs and groups. For example, pupils listened to others' ideas carefully when they prepared for their performance of 'The Wind in the Willows', a play about a rat, a mole and a toad.
- They feel safe in school and know how to keep themselves safe on the internet. This is because staff offer pupils thoughtful guidance about how to handle complicated situations. One pupil said, 'Staff are wise and they help us if we ask them.'
- Pupils are keen to learn and they concentrate well in lessons. They enjoy many exciting topics such as one about tropical rainforests where they made clay models of various animals which live in this sort of environment. They found a science topic about materials fascinating because they used different chemicals to make a model rocket fly through the air.
- Pupils say they have an adult they could turn to if any bullying were to occur, which they consider unlikely. Pupils understand the different types of bullying that can occur. For instance, they know about different types of cyber-bullying and name calling.
- Attendance is above average because the school monitors this carefully. Rewards are used successfully to encourage pupils to come to school every day. Pupils are excluded very rarely.
- Not all pupils are effectively involved in considering how other pupils are successful. This limits their ability to offer positive feedback and encouraging points for improvement.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership requires improvement because, although teaching is monitored regularly, one or two

staff are not proving to leaders that they have met their personal targets for improving teaching between observations. This means that improvements in teaching are not totally secure.

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher form a strong and enthusiastic team. They have valuable ideas about ways to improve the school. They are keenly supported by all staff. All work diligently to make the school a better place to learn. Checks on the school's work are used appropriately to create the school development plan which contains specific targets. The school is always trying to find ways to improve. Training is used carefully to develop staff expertise. For instance, training has been used successfully to develop staff and teachers' knowledge of phonics and so pupils' reading and comprehension skills are improving.
 - Parents get on effectively with school staff and they say their concerns are responded to well. They appreciate the regular parents' evenings but some would like to receive a short interim report about how well their child is getting on in between these meetings.
 - The safeguarding of pupils is taken seriously. All staff are checked to see if they are suitable to work with children and a single central record of these checks is kept carefully. All staff have completed basic child protection training and many staff have first aid qualifications. Children with medical needs or those at risk are cared for well.
 - The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Pupils' spiritual development is supported successfully through opportunities to reflect in assemblies. Moral and social development is good and so, for instance, older pupils wrote thoughtful newspaper articles which developed their awareness of issues such as vandalism.
 - The curriculum promotes basic skills effectively. Speaking, literacy and numeracy skills are developed through daily lessons with weekly science sessions. Pupils learn about other subjects through topic work which develops several skills at one time. For example, Year 1 pupils talked about what they liked and disliked about their felt puppets before they wrote evaluations of their design, making and measuring skills.
 - The local authority keeps in contact with the school on a regular basis and provides effective support and challenge. It has helped the school to improve the quality of teaching.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors fulfil their legal duties. They keep pupils safe because they make sure that new staff are appointed following the correct procedures. They know the reasons why staff are promoted and understand how weaker staff are supported to improve their skills. They carefully review targets for the headteacher. Governors complete training courses which are beginning to help them hold the school more effectively to account. They have a basic understanding of how good the quality of teaching is developing pupils' key skills. They make sure that choices about how money is spent, for example specific pupil premium funding, give value for money. Governors receive a simple summary of each year group's progress and attainment. Some governors do not challenge school leaders sufficiently about the progress made by different groups of pupils. This is because they do not have a full understanding of how to interpret school data which tracks pupils' achievement and attainment.
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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

Unique reference number	133254
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	411792

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	229
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Caroline Bruton
Headteacher	Joanne Willcox
Date of previous school inspection	7 December 2009
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