

Henham and Ugley Primary and Nursery School

School Lane, Henham, Bishop's Stortford, CM22 6BP

Inspection dates

11–12 September 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

- Teaching does not always provide sufficient challenge, leading to inconsistencies in pupils' progress over time. Teachers do not always make sufficient use of available information as to pupils' prior knowledge and skills.
- Pupils' progress in reading and writing varies from year to year. There are not enough planned opportunities for pupils to practise their writing skills in other subjects.
- Teachers' expectations in subjects other than literacy and numeracy are not high enough and work lacks challenge, especially for the most able.
- School self-evaluation is not sufficiently rigorous.
- When evaluating lessons, school leaders have not always given sufficient priority to pupils' progress.

The school has the following strengths

- Provision and progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good.
- Progress of pupils in Years 1 and 2, and the quality of their written work, have improved and are now good.
- Standards in reading, writing and mathematics are above average at both Year 2 and Year 6. Year 6 pupils made good progress in mathematics in 2013.
- Pupils enjoy school and feel safe. Their behaviour and attitudes to learning are good.
- Governors are thorough in their approach and are knowledgeable about the management of staff performance.
- Senior leaders have, with external support, taken effective action to tackle identified weaknesses so that a trend of improvement is now evident.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 16 lessons, of which four were seen together with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with a group of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and two other governors, the school’s subject and senior leaders, a representative of the local authority and the school’s independent external advisor.
- Inspectors took account of the 55 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), alongside the school’s own recent survey of parental views.
- Inspectors observed the school’s work and looked at a range of school documentation, including: records of school checks on the quality of teaching; the school improvement plan; and records relating to behaviour, attendance, safeguarding, and the tracking of pupils’ progress. They also looked closely at pupils’ written work and listened to pupils reading.

Inspection team

George Logan, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Bimla Thakur	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Henham and Ugley Primary and Nursery School is an average-sized primary school.
- Pupils are predominantly from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is slightly below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium (additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, those in care and those from other groups) is well below the national average.
- The school introduced a twice-weekly breakfast club in September 2013. This provision is managed by the governing body and was reviewed as part of the current inspection.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment in English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching across the school so that a higher proportion is good or outstanding, by:
 - ensuring that pupils' experience of learning is more inspirational and engaging, with more opportunities for active involvement
 - making more effective use of data on pupils' past progress to ensure that lessons have greater pace and provide more challenge for all pupils.
- Strengthen achievement across the school by ensuring that:
 - pupils make consistently good progress in reading across the school
 - more opportunities are provided for pupils to develop their writing skills in subjects across the curriculum
 - the teaching of foundation subjects is more innovative, providing more challenging tasks, with higher expectations of the quality and extent of pupils' recorded work.
- Improve the leadership, management and governance by:
 - more rigorous checking of pupils' progress during lesson observations
 - ensuring that school self-evaluation is rigorous and accurate
 - increasing the effectiveness of the leadership of foundation subjects so that outcomes for pupils are improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' progress is inconsistent. While standards are generally above average by the end of Year 6, pupils' achievement has not been sufficiently rapid in recent years, particularly in Years 3 to 6. The 2012 assessments indicated some underperformance, with too few pupils making accelerated progress in any subject, particularly writing. However, during the past year, the momentum of pupils' progress increased and was good in some respects, particularly in mathematics. A small number of pupils successfully tackled the very demanding Level 6 in mathematics and this significantly boosted the overall profile of progress. On the other hand, there were still too few pupils exceeding the expected progress level in reading and writing.
- Pupils are, overall, competent writers, supported by regular extended writing tasks. However, pupils' written work indicates that their writing skills have not been consistently promoted in subjects across the curriculum. Although pupils mostly achieve well in reading across the school, the 2013 assessments showed that Year 6 pupils made much less progress than they had in earlier years, so adversely affecting their overall progress.
- The achievement of pupils eligible for free school meals and supported by pupil premium funding is similar to that of the other pupils and, as such, requires improvement. There were not enough pupils in Year 6, or in any other year group, known to be eligible for the pupil premium in 2012 or 2013 to comment upon their attainment in English and mathematics. However, their progress was similar to that of the other pupils.
- Attainment by the end of Year 2 is above average. Well-judged interventions by school leaders in the last year have contributed to more consistently effective teaching and more rapid progress in Years 1 and 2.
- Children enter Nursery with skills at least in line with than those found nationally. While there is some variability from year to year, children typically leave Reception at levels at least in line with, and more often above, those found nationally. Both provision and progress are good. A number of improvements have been made in response to issues identified at the last inspection.
- The development of early reading skills is effective. Nursery and Reception children and pupils in Years 1 and 2 benefit from a systematic grounding in the linking of sounds and letters (phonics). For older pupils, any gaps in their phonic knowledge are addressed through additional teaching.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are supported well. Rigorous monitoring of the impact of additional teaching and a well-established programme of intervention teaching ensures that these pupils are making increasingly good progress.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Even though the majority of teaching is good, too many lessons fail to challenge or inspire pupils sufficiently, leading, at times, to a slow pace of learning. The school has rightly identified that the level of challenge in subjects other than literacy and numeracy could be greater, particularly for the most able pupils.
- While acknowledging that the school term was not far advanced, planning in some lessons did not indicate that teachers had taken sufficient account of existing information as to pupils' prior knowledge and skills. As a result, activities did not always provide sufficient challenge,

particularly for the most able pupils. Relationships are a significant strength across the school.

- Overall, the checking and supporting of pupils' progress has improved. Pupils have individual targets to focus their efforts to improve and regularly evaluate what they have achieved. The marking of pupils' work, particularly in writing, mostly identifies what they need to do next to improve, with particularly good practice in Year 6. Some opportunities are provided for pupils to respond to marking, although practice varies between classes.
- Increased awareness by staff, targeted support and rigorous tracking of progress are contributing to better provision for the few pupils supported by pupil premium funding.
- In the best lessons, the pace of learning is brisk. In a successful numeracy lesson, for example, Year 6 pupils extended their understanding of decimal place value. The teacher's subject knowledge was good and his explanations were clear and concise. Tasks were generally well matched to pupils' abilities, if a little challenging for the average pupils. Overall, learning was good, underpinned by pupils' enthusiasm and good behaviour.
- The teaching of reading is generally effective because guided reading sessions are tightly organised, with accurate pupil groupings and appropriate texts. As a result, they successfully develop pupils' interest, imagination and higher-order reading skills. However, outcomes dipped in Year 6 in 2013 possibly because of the greater priority given to mathematics and writing.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage benefit from consistently good teaching. Together with effective assessment practice and well planned lessons, this ensures that progress is consistently good.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' behaviour is good. There are effective procedures to address any poor behaviour. The comprehensive behaviour logs show few recorded incidents. There has been only one exclusion recorded in recent years. The school meticulously records racist incidents. These are low-level and infrequent. Pupils feel safe in school and are certain that the adults will resolve any difficulties. Few of the parents and carers who gave their views indicated any concerns about behaviour.
- Pupils speak positively of behaviour. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. In a Year 5 literacy lesson, for example, where pupils were generating effective vocabulary to enrich the description of a woodland scene, pupils were visibly inspired by the enthusiastic response of a skilled teaching assistant. However, even when teaching is less than inspiring, pupils sustain a good level of engagement.
- Pupils feel that bullying is not an issue. They understand that bullying may take different forms and are particularly aware of the risks associated with social networking sites. Pupils undertake responsibilities, such as playground buddies, which enable them to contribute to the community.
- Pupils have a good appreciation of risk. They know how to keep themselves safe in various circumstances. Year 6 pupils are well prepared for moving to secondary school.
- Attendance is above average. A further improvement on the already impressive attendance figures was achieved in the last school year. Pupils arrive at school punctually. The newly-established Breakfast Club provides a safe environment for pupils who arrive early at school.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- In the last school year, senior leaders have acted upon emerging concerns about pupils' progress. These actions have secured better teaching and provision in Years 1 and 2 and improved progress of older pupils. However, senior leaders recognise that further work is needed to consolidate improvements, particularly in teaching. Lesson observations, while broadly accurate, have not always focused sufficiently on the extent of pupils' progress. Performance management procedures, with sharper targets, are now being used increasingly effectively.
- Although the analysis of data on pupils' progress and attainment is thorough and accurate, the school's evaluation of performance over time, and of its own strengths, is over-positive in its conclusions even when current upward trends are taken into account.
- While the school has received no direct support from its local authority, it has a productive relationship with an independent external advisor. This has provided the impetus for several recent initiatives leading to clear improvements, particularly in mathematics. The school undertakes moderation and training initiatives with other schools within its extended 'cluster'. This has boosted staff confidence, particularly in day-to-day assessment practice.
- The curriculum is broad in so far as the school teaches the expected range of subjects and topics. However, it recognises that not all subjects are as innovatively developed as they might be. School leaders see the further development of subject leader roles as central to revitalising the foundation curriculum. A wide range of out-of-school activities and visits adds to pupils' enjoyment. Many pupils learn individual musical instruments. The school is initially deploying primary school sport funding to ensure that teachers are more skilled in teaching specific activities. It is too early to evaluate the impact of this initiative.
- The leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Past weaknesses in provision have been addressed successfully. Outdoor provision is now good, enhanced by regular access to Forest School activities, both on site and in a separate wooded area in the parish.
- Provision for pupils' social and moral development is a strength. Spiritual development is supported well through good church links. The school has, in the past, created a number of opportunities for pupils to engage with diverse cultural groups in the United Kingdom and abroad, although these are not all currently active.
- Links with parents and carers are good. The school works hard to engage a few parents who are 'hard-to-reach', so benefiting pupils' learning. There is good support for parents of children entering Reception and for those making choices for secondary education.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors know the school well. They undertake regular training and understand their role well. They are well aware that progress has been an issue in recent years and are working with leaders to address remaining inconsistencies. They are able to compare school outcomes to national data. They have, however, limited formal involvement in school self-evaluation. They are challenging in their scrutiny of the management of the school, but have confidence in the capacity of senior leaders to ensure that all staff continue to raise their game. Governors ensure that the priorities of equality of opportunity, tackling any discrimination and fostering good relationships, are maintained. They are keen to ensure that pay and promotion are firmly linked to teachers' effectiveness. Governors evaluate decisions about the use and impact of pupil premium funding to close gaps in pupils' achievement. They ensure, along with senior leaders, that safeguarding arrangements meet national 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	114975
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	425365

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	214
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Charlie Martineau
Headteacher	Sue Giles
Date of previous school inspection	23 October 2008
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