

Herbert Strutt Primary School

Thornhill Avenue, Belper, DE56 1SH

Inspection dates 18–19 September 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	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.

- Pupils' achievement is good. After a decline in attainment since the previous inspection, progress has accelerated over the last two years. Pupils now reach standards of attainment above the national average in English and mathematics.
- Decisive steps taken by leaders to improve the quality of teaching are resulting in faster progress for all pupils. Progress is good in all year groups and in all subjects.
- Teaching is consistently good with some outstanding elements, such as the way teachers devise activities that engage the pupils' interest in acquiring fresh knowledge and learning well.
- The outdoor provision for younger pupils has improved and this has led to enhancing their physical well being and consolidating their good progress.
- Improvements in the way subjects are linked together have enlivened the learning in lessons and made sure that learning activities are tailored precisely to meet all pupils' needs.
- Pupils' positive attitudes make a strong contribution to their effective learning in lessons. They feel very safe in school and enjoy taking on responsibilities such as acting as buddy readers with younger pupils.
- The leadership and management of the school, including governance, are good. Extensive training has improved governors' ability to increase the pace of improvement.
- The headteacher has very successfully motivated the staff to aspire to develop their practice even further. Robust checks on teaching, followed by intensive training and support, have helped teachers to improve the quality of their work.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Sometimes not enough time is given in lessons for pupils to reflect on their learning and address any misconceptions.
- Teachers do not always provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to explore ideas for themselves and explain their thinking.
- Subject leaders are not involved fully in checking the teaching in their subjects.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed nine teachers and visited 18 lessons or part lessons. Six lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher and other senior leaders, the English and mathematics subject leaders, pupils and governors. The lead inspector had a discussion with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors observed pupils' work, looked in their exercise books and listened to them read.
- A range of documentation was examined, including the school's analysis of how well it is doing, information on pupils' progress, and documents regarding safeguarding and key reports and policies.
- The inspector took account of the 28 responses to the online questionnaire Parent View, and analysed 19 questionnaires completed by staff.

Inspection team

Andrew Stafford, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Elaine Williams

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Herbert Strutt Primary is a smaller-than-average sized primary school. Pupils attend from the town and surrounding area.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage caters for Reception-aged children. There are two mixed-age classes in Years 3 and 4; there are single age classes in Years 1, 2, 5 and 6.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional government funding provided in this school for children known to be eligible for free school meals) is well above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The headteacher joined the school in September 2012.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that more is outstanding by making sure that:
 - lessons always encourage reflection, consolidate what has been learnt and tackle any misconceptions
 - teachers provide enough opportunities for pupils to explore ideas for themselves and explain their thinking.
- Extend the role of subject leaders by establishing a programme for them to contribute to whole-school self-evaluation more fully by direct observation of teaching in their area of responsibility.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children come from a very wide range of pre-school experiences and join the school in the Reception class with skills that are below those expected for their age, particularly in their personal and social development and in their communication and language skills. They make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage in all areas of learning, especially in their personal development and in reading, and enter Year 1 with broadly average standards.
- Since the previous inspection, attainment has been above the national average at Key Stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics. Over the past two years attainment at Key Stage 2 has been above average in mathematics and rose to be above average in both mathematics and English in 2013. Proportionally, eight out of ten pupils reached the higher level in reading, ten out of ten in writing, and ten out of ten in mathematics, indicating good attainment for the most able. Standards of attainment for the current Year 6 are rising in both English and mathematics.
- Over the recent past, progress has accelerated more rapidly as teachers match the work more precisely to meet the needs of pupils and extend the more able to the full. The more regular and robust tracking of pupils' progress has made sure that any pupil whose progress slows is identified quickly and helped to catch up.
- In last summer's end of key stage tests, the attainment of Year 2 pupils who benefited from the pupil premium, including those who are eligible for free school meals, showed that they were two terms behind their classmates. The attainment of Year 6 pupils who benefited from the pupil premium matched the attainment of other pupils in Year 6 in English and mathematics. Currently, any gaps are closing rapidly as a result of funding being used to provide more tailored support for these pupils so that now all are making good progress in line with their classmates.
- Phonics (the sounds that letters make) teaching is now consistent for the younger children where they are grouped by ability for a session each day. All pupils, including those from lower starting points, make good progress with early reading skills and spelling. The school has developed a strong reading culture and there is good support for reading at home. Pupils work out unfamiliar words from a mixture of ways they have been taught and have a good understanding of the stories they are reading. Pupils observed read with fluency and expression from books appropriate for their age.
- Pupils say that the most helpful thing they do is exchange ideas with a partner before they start to write. Standards in writing have improved, especially for boys, and this is due to the opportunities all pupils have to write at length in a range of subjects, where teachers' expectations are high for the standards pupils must reach. More pupils reached the higher levels than seen nationally.
- A number of other initiatives have been successful in raising attainment. For example, pupils participate widely in physical education and sports and this improves their performance.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are achieving well because their rates of progress have improved. The carefully targeted programmes of support are helping these pupils to be more successful, especially in reading and mathematics.
- Pupils enjoy their learning because teachers make the lessons interesting and give them clear guidance on how well they are doing. Sometimes pupils do not have enough opportunities to

explore ideas for themselves and explain their thinking.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching is consistently good, with some that is outstanding. This profile has improved considerably over the past year due to the introduction of regular checks on the work of teachers with an increased focus on the progress pupils make. The sharing of expertise across the school has helped to increase the rate of improvement in teachers' practice.
- Highly effective teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage enables children to make good progress. Accurate assessment leads adults to be able to plan appropriately for next steps in learning. As well as effective teaching of key skills, children are helped to think about what they are learning and to develop the skill of working by themselves and collaborating with others.
- Teachers are skilled at providing learning activities that motivate and interest pupils. For example, in one successful lesson, pupils were so engrossed in working out numerical solutions to problems expressed in letters that the teacher was able to extend their mathematical skills as they talked at length with their partners about the possible solutions.
- Reading, writing and mathematics are taught well. The teaching of writing is much improved, as teachers provide pupils with frequent opportunities to write at length and practise their skills, in both English lessons and across other subjects. The introduction of the requirement that all pupils carry out a mathematical investigation each week has helped to improve pupils' ability to apply their problem-solving skills in numeracy.
- A robust system of assessment that focuses on producing accurate data on gains in learning, makes sure that teachers know how well pupils are progressing, enabling them to plan precisely to close any gaps in attainment. The new system of target setting is having a strong impact as it has helped to raise teachers' expectations of pupils' achievement.
- Marking and feedback to pupils on how well they are doing are of good quality across the school. Pupils respond positively to comments from teachers and use these to make improvements to their work. However, teachers do not always allow enough time for pupils to reflect on their learning in lessons to consolidate what they have learnt and address any misconceptions.
- The pupil premium is being used to provide targeted teaching in small groups or individually, to help pupils catch up with their basic skills. This is proving effective as these pupils are making faster progress now.
- Teaching assistants are skilled in providing support for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. They are very effective in supporting pupils with emotional issues and helping these pupils to be included as fully as possible in school life.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' behaviour in and around the school is typically good because of the harmonious relationships that exist. Pupils enjoy the company of each other and of adults. Behaviour is managed well by adults in a calm, friendly and respectful way. Pupils, the staff and the vast majority of parents endorse the view that behaviour is good overall.
- In lessons, pupils concentrate hard and apply themselves well. They enjoy their learning

activities and are keen to succeed. However, behaviour is not yet outstanding as occasionally pupils lose focus when their thinking in some lessons is not extended sufficiently.

- Pupils are very clear that there is no bullying at this school, although there are occasional 'fallings out' that are resolved quickly. They have a good awareness of the different forms that bullying can take, for example cyber-bullying and name-calling. They have good strategies for keeping themselves safe and preventing any discrimination.
- Pupils are very proud of their school, which they would recommend unreservedly, 'It's just perfect,' said one pupil, and others agree. They feel safe as they trust the adults to take good care of them. They demonstrate good empathy for those who are emotionally fragile.
- Pupils relish the opportunities presented to them to take on additional responsibilities in school in roles such as monitors in a variety of situations, and as school councillors. Pupils report that they are involved suitably in making decisions about issues that affect them, for example, in the appointment of senior leaders.
- The school's good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development underpins their good behaviour. The school supports pupils with behavioural and emotional issues effectively, to enable them to be included in school life. All pupils are polite and well mannered.
- Attendance rates and punctuality are good because the school has got rigorous procedures to promote them. Most pupils attend well and are punctual to school because they and their parents are made fully aware by the school of how well good attendance can promote good progress.

The leadership and management are good

- The dynamic leadership of the new headteacher has instilled in the school a renewed sense of high ambition and purpose. She has gained the confidence of staff and set about implementing effective strategies to improve the quality of teaching and learning. She has brought clarity to self-evaluation, and plans for improvement are focused sharply on the correct priorities.
- The local authority has been active in helping to establish the new leadership and given good support throughout the process. Following rigorous checks on teaching, the school has accessed pertinent training for teachers which has raised the quality of teaching and increased the rate of improvement.
- The robust system for checking and reviewing pupils' progress has enabled senior leaders to judge the impact of new initiatives and hold teachers to account more readily for their pupils' progress.
- The headteacher has enabled teachers and subject leaders to gain valuable knowledge and experience through training and working with their counterparts in other schools. This guidance has meant that they are able to implement new ways of working, and to make the necessary changes and check on outcomes for pupils. However, they are not contributing fully to whole-school self-evaluation as they do not undertake any direct observations of teaching.
- Well-planned changes to the subjects taught have made sure that it is continually evolving to meet the needs of pupils and engage their interest. Whole-school themes such as the 'From Burp to Bottom' topic, and a wide range of enrichment activities, are broadening pupils'

horizons and promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.

- The school demonstrates its commitment to equality in the way the provision is being targeted carefully to make sure all pupils are making good progress.
- The school has embarked upon an extensive programme of physical education to enhance the well being of all pupils by employing specialist coach for nine hours each week. This runs alongside the school promoting a healthy lifestyle, supported well by the kitchen providing a good, balanced diet for the large number of pupils who opt for a school lunch.
- The school has worked hard to help parents understand its aims and has kept them informed well during the changes in leadership. Parent View registers overwhelming support for the benefits for their children and their confidence in the leadership of the school.
- The headteacher's liaison with two local schools has established a strong partnership which provides beneficial guidance for the teaching of English, and support for a newly appointed headteacher. Two middle leaders who have advanced skills have supported many schools in the authority. One concentrates on teaching and assessment in the Early Years Foundation Stage, the other demonstrates good practice in teaching the practical elements in science lessons. This has helped to improve the quality of teaching, so that it is now securely good.
- All statutory requirements for safeguarding are met and managed effectively. The knowledge and skills of staff are kept up to date through regular and rigorous training.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are extremely well organised and very knowledgeable about the school's strengths and areas for development. They have a good understanding of the school's performance in the national context because they check the school's work for themselves, by undertaking learning walks in the school. They undertake any training, for example, in data analysis, safeguarding and finance. This means they are able to give good levels of challenge to the school's leaders about, for example, pupils' progress. They have been rigorous in eliminating teaching that has been inadequate and consistently monitoring any underperformance in pupils' progress. The governing body evaluates how well it is doing by asking 'What have we achieved?' after their meetings. They have been very supportive of the school leaders during the transition to new leadership and this has helped to gain the confidence of parents. Governors carry out their statutory duties very diligently, making sure that the headteacher's performance is rigorously assessed through annual objectives. Governors have a good awareness of the quality of teaching across the school, how staff performance is managed and how this is aligned to their pay progression. Governors manage the budget effectively, including the pupil premium. They are aware of how the pupil premium is being used and the impact it is having, and they carefully monitor the school's finances.

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	112789
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	424977

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	200
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Horwood
Headteacher	Sarah Core
Date of previous school inspection	15 September 2011
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