

Little Heath Primary School

School Road, Potters Bar, EN6 1JW

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 make good progress throughout the school. By the time they leave in Year 6 they reach standards that are well above those found nationally.
- The quality of teaching is good with teachers providing interesting activities matched to pupils' needs and abilities.
- Pupils have good attitudes to learning as shown by their hard work in lessons, good behaviour and above average attendance. They say they feel safe and, together with the adults in the school, they have created a caring environment for each other.
- The school gives all its pupils good quality experiences including opportunities for music and sport that successfully promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- School leaders have successfully focused on improving teaching and learning and the school has improved since the previous inspection when overall effectiveness was judged to be satisfactory.
- Senior leaders, including the governing body, have a good understanding of how well pupils are achieving and what could be done to make the school even better.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Although teaching is good overall, it does not yet enable all pupils to make outstanding progress. Teachers' use of questioning is not helping them to check how effective their teaching has been.
- Pupils are not always given sufficient opportunities to develop their independence or to manage their own learning.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 17 lessons, two of which were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- Inspectors observed pupils in lessons, at play, at lunch and as they moved around school.
- Discussions were held with staff, the Chair of the Governing Body and other governors, and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors held meetings with two groups of pupils, listened to pupils read and checked reading progress records.
- A wide range of documentation was reviewed, including records of the quality of teaching and of pupils' attainment and progress, the school's view of its performance and the school development plan. In addition, records of the governing body meetings, safeguarding documentation and reports from the school improvement adviser were reviewed.
- During the inspection the inspectors took account of the 65 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), and 20 responses to the staff questionnaire. Inspectors also spoke to parents at the beginning of the school day.

Inspection team

Susan Thomas-Pounce, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Deborah Whittle	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school.
- Only a very small number of pupils are supported by the pupil premium. This is additional government funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The large majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion of those supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also below average.
- The school met the government's current floor standard in 2012, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching so that even more pupils make much better than expected progress by:
 - giving pupils more opportunities to develop their independence and take greater responsibility to manage their own learning
 - improving the way teachers use pupils' responses to questioning when they check the effectiveness of pupils' learning.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Most children start school with skills that are typically expected for their age. Staff work closely with parents to provide work that builds on children's previous experience and interests. From Nursery to Reception, stimulating activities continue to capture children's imagination so that by the end of the Reception year, children are well prepared for further learning in Year 1.
- Whatever their starting points, pupils across the school make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Results at the end of Key Stage 1 are good and above the national average. For the last two years, attainment by the end of Year 6 has been well above average.
- Throughout the curriculum the lesson activities motivate pupils and help them develop their love of learning. The positive attitudes they develop have a good impact on their achievement.
- In the last two years there has been a big rise in the proportions of pupils gaining the highest levels in Year 2 and in Year 6. Work is well matched to pupils' skills and abilities and stretches them all. The most-able pupils are now making rapid progress and the proportion of pupils attaining Level 5 has risen to above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils' progress in early reading skills is good. Letters and the sounds they make are taught effectively in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1, ensuring that early reading skills provide a secure foundation.
- In the 2012 letters and sounds national screening check the proportion of pupils who met the required standard was above the 2012 national average and has remained so again in 2013.
- Pupils have a secure grasp of a range of things they can do to extend their reading skills. They read widely, confidently and are often enthusiastic readers. Pupils' have benefited from a systematic and whole-school approach to developing their reading skills.
- In this school, the pupil premium funding is used well to support individual pupils. The school's tracking data show that this is having a positive impact upon the achievement of these pupils. There are very few pupils in this group but at the end of Year 6 their attainment in both English and mathematics is above that of their classmates.
- The early identification of pupils' needs and the good provision for them ensures that disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs achieve well against their starting points. Staff identify what they need to learn and adapt work accordingly. This demonstrates the school's effective commitment to promoting equality of opportunity.

The quality of teaching is good

- School leaders' rigorous and decisive actions over the last three years have raised the quality of teaching and led directly to improvements in pupils' learning and achievement. Teachers have benefitted from a substantial amount of professional development and individually focused support.
- Teaching in the Nursery and Reception classes is effective and supports children's good learning and progress. Children are provided with a wide range of stimulating and imaginative activities,

both in the classroom and outside. There is a good balance of activities that are adult led and those that children choose for themselves. Adults model good use of language in their conversations with pupils and through their incisive questioning.

- Teachers have good relationships with pupils and provide a positive atmosphere for learning in lessons. Most have good subject knowledge and high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour. Consequently, pupils respond readily to tasks with interest and enthusiasm. Pupils understand what they are learning and why. Pupils' attitudes have a positive effect on their learning. However, teachers' questioning does not always provide enough opportunities for all pupils to answer, nor is it always used to check pupils' understanding rigorously.
- Much is expected of those pupils who experience difficulty learning. Well thought-out support ensures that these pupils are given the help they need. Teaching assistants ensure that disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are fully included and able to make good progress.
- Teachers ensure that the most-able pupils are set more challenging work to enable them to reach their full potential.
- Inspection evidence and the school's monitoring records show that whilst teaching is good, it is not yet outstanding. Its impact is not consistently of the highest standard in every classroom. Not enough lessons provide opportunities for pupils to show they can get on with their work and learn on their own.
- In the lessons where good or better teaching was observed, teachers ensured pupils had good opportunity to work in pairs and small groups to discuss and reflect on their learning.
- In a literacy lesson in the upper part of the school, for example, the class observed a video clip which sparked enthusiastic group discussions, stimulated learning and resulted in the highly effective use of descriptive language using similes, metaphors, and alliteration. This helped pupils lead their own learning and develop strong independence skills. These aspects were lacking in the weakest lessons observed.
- Teaching effectively promotes pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, which is evident in lessons and around the school. Pupils work well together, value the opinion of others, show good awareness of other cultures and lessons are rarely disrupted through unacceptable behaviour.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The school is a happy and welcoming place in which pupils enjoy the opportunity to share and to talk about their work. Pupils say that they are safe at their school and that they enjoy learning. They value the all-age friendship groups they are placed in when they arrive in the Reception class. This encourages them to be sensitive to the needs of others.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning showing both enthusiasm and determination to do their best. They are keen to participate in lessons and ask questions to help them improve.
- Behaviour observed in lessons was good. Pupils listen well to their teachers and to each other, cooperating well and treating each other with respect. They have a well-defined sense of right and wrong and move around the school well because they understand the school's rules and routines.

- Pupils know about different forms of bullying. They say, and school records confirm, that bullying is rare, and when it does happen the pupils are confident that the school manages this well. Pupils talk with a good understanding about the dangers of using the internet inappropriately.
- Pupils are proud of their school. They want to come every day and as a result attendance is well above the national average.
- Pupils willingly accept responsibility in the school. They act as school councillors, and buddies befriend others in the playground. Pupils regularly raise money for a wide range of charities.
- Discussion with parents and evidence from the Parent View survey indicate that parents are pleased with the standards of behaviour in the school and that they agree that their children are safe and happy at the school.

The leadership and management are good

- Under the leadership of the headteacher and her deputy the school has improved significantly. Accurate self-evaluation, more rigorous and regular monitoring and evaluation of all aspects of the school's work are securely in place. Consequently, levels of attainment have steadily risen since 2010 and achievement for all groups of pupils is now good.
- The school is using the tracking system more effectively to monitor pupils' progress accurately and to pinpoint accurately what needs to be done to continue to raise pupils' achievement. This allows the headteacher to hold teachers to account at the regular pupils' progress meetings. Decisions about pay are firmly based on the quality of teaching.
- The skills of other leaders including subject leaders are developed well. Their scope of responsibility has been broadened. This and their increased accountability, has had a positive impact on raising pupils' achievement. Senior leaders have put in place robust systems and structures which ensure that children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make a secure start to their education.
- Leaders and governors have secured the whole-hearted support and confidence of staff. All the staff understand and are committed to the role they must play in helping the school to improve further.
- The curriculum is well-matched to pupils' needs and interests. A good range of creative activities and visits enrich pupils' learning experiences. These promote pupils' interest and positive attitudes well. Effective links between different subjects and events in school extend pupils' knowledge of the world and promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
- All pupils have wide opportunities for sports and music. The rich range of learning experiences provided is proof of the school's excellent commitment to ensuring all pupils have a fair chance to succeed.
- The school plans to use the recent funding for physical education by providing extra additional activities to supplement the good quality sporting opportunities provided both during the school day and in after school clubs. Suitable plans are in place to evaluate the impact of the funding on pupils' achievement and health.

- Underpinning the effective curriculum is the caring and supportive ethos the school promotes which helps pupils to feel safe and secure. All safeguarding requirements are met fully. Policies and procedures to ensure the safeguarding and welfare of pupils are robust and these are checked regularly.
- Pupil premium funding has been used effectively to accelerate the progress of targeted pupils in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The local authority rightly judges this school to be 'self improving' and as such it has provided 'light touch' support.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body uses information well to evaluate the school's performance in relation to other schools both locally and nationally. Governors understand their role and continue to undertake training so that they can challenge school leaders and hold the school to account. They have high aspirations for the school. Governors are visible in school and have developed effective links with the school's leaders and teachers. This has increased their awareness of the school's performance and what is needed to improve achievement further. They understand about the performance of different pupil groups including those funded through the pupil premium. They make sure that all resources, including staff and the pupil premium, are used effectively in raising achievement. They aim to provide the very best opportunities for all pupils to achieve high standards. They understand fully the operation of performance management, and monitor closely its links to salary progression.

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	117567
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	425265

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	237
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Charlotte Sewell
Headteacher	Kim Custis
Date of previous school inspection	13 October 2011
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