

# Helmingham Community Primary School

School Road, Helmingham, Stowmarket, IP14 6EX

**Inspection dates** 19–20 September 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
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.

- Standards are mostly average but are above average in some cases.
- In 2013, the proportion of Year 6 exceeding the progress expected in English and mathematics was above the national figures.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs do well from their individual starting points.
- The use of assessment information is good. The accuracy of teachers' assessments is checked by working with other local schools.
- The school's checking and review of teaching is consistently accurate. Teaching is good. Pupils respond very positively to teachers' effective questioning.
- Behaviour is good. Pupils work particularly well together, feel safe, and have very positive attitudes to learning.
- Attendance is above the national average.
- Parents and carers are pleased with the school
- Additional government funding has been used well to support pupils who need extra help. As a result, they achieve better than their peers.
- A well-established working partnership with the local secondary school provides effective specialist support for mathematics.
- Leadership and management are good; the headteacher expects high standards from both pupils and teachers. She is effective in the many roles required of those who lead small schools.
- Despite limited resources, senior staff and governors have secured improvement in accommodation, facilities, teaching and achievement.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils do not do quite as well in writing as they do in reading and mathematics.
- Support staff are not always used to best effect in lessons.

## Information about this inspection

- Her Majesty's Inspector conducted seven lesson observations and reviewed a number of short sessions, seeing every teacher at work. The inspector conducted three joint observations with the headteacher. All staff were offered professional feedback about the lessons observed.
- Informal discussions were held with groups of pupils and their parents and carers. Further meetings were arranged with the Chair and other members of the Governing Body, a representative of the local authority, and nominated staff.
- There were no responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) but the inspector spoke to parents during the course of the inspection. The inspector reviewed the 13 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- HMI looked at a range of documents provided by the school, including the school improvement plan, the analysis of pupils' progress, the headteacher's reports to the governing body, the minutes of governing body meetings, and the work in the pupils' books.
- During this inspection, the inspector asked additional questions designed to ascertain the school's view of the impact and effectiveness of local authority services to support school improvement. This information will contribute to work being carried out by Ofsted to assess the use, quality and impact of those services.

## Inspection team

David Jones, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This rural school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Pupils are taught in three mixed-age classes.
- All pupils are White British and there are none who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium is well below the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding for students known to be eligible for free school meals, those in local authority care and others.
- The proportion of pupils who need extra help with their learning because they are disabled or have special educational needs is below average but varies significantly by year group. A small number of pupils with dyslexia, Asperger's syndrome or who are on the autistic spectrum are supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- In the last year, five pupils joined the school partway through their primary education.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the consistency of pupils' progress in writing, particularly in Key Stage 2, by:
  - enhancing their speaking and listening skills
  - using exemplar material and contextual resources to guide pupils' understanding.
- Make good use of support staff to provide well-focused tasks appropriate to pupils' group or individual needs.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- The majority of pupils start school with levels of attainment that are below average and some arrive with limited communication skills. Similarly, some pupils who join the school partway through their primary education arrive with a disability or a special educational need. Children settle well in the Early Years Foundation Stage and when they join other year groups; effective teaching means that all pupils make good progress.
- The small numbers of pupils in each year group requires the careful comparison of individual progress against national and age-related data.
- The results of the 2013 Year 1 screening for early reading skills were average. The results of the 2013 Key Stage 1 teacher assessments were above the national average for reading and writing but average for mathematics; all three areas recorded a notable improvement on the 2012 results. HMI reviewed the school's current data, which indicates rising standards, and found this to be supported by the quality of the work in the pupils' books. Pupils in Key Stage 1 make good progress.
- Standards in Years 3 to 6 vary, with inconsistencies in writing and mathematics. The school has placed emphasis on addressing these issues. In 2013, the percentage of pupils at Key Stage 2 reaching and exceeding expected progress in English and mathematics was above the national data. Pupils are making good progress, but progress is less even through Key Stage 2 in writing.
- The individual pupils who are disabled or who have a statement of special educational need or those in need of extra help make good and, in some cases, outstanding progress because of the early identification of need and the individual support provided. Effective specialist support is provided weekly for those with dyslexia. Those pupils with Asperger's syndrome or who are on the autistic spectrum make good progress from low starting points.
- The very small numbers of individuals supported by the pupil premium make outstanding progress, making a year's progress in English and mathematics in just six months. Their attainment compares favourably with that of their classmates.
- The school has just initiated a locally organised programme of physical education and sport. HMI observed mixed-age groups of girls and boys playing football during the lunch period; their skill level, enthusiasm and knowledge of the game was impressive.

### The quality of teaching is good

- During this inspection, almost all lessons seen were good; this matched the detailed records maintained by the school and was reflected in the good progress made by all pupils.
- Lessons are generally well organised because teachers draw on the accurate assessments made during marking in order to plan their lessons. They ensure that pupils are involved in their own learning. As a result, pupils enjoy their lessons and are keen to learn. Teachers understand what they need to do to help pupils to improve. Teachers' marking is a notable strength and the classroom follow-up helps pupils to make good progress
- In the small-group and individual support sessions, staff listen carefully to the pupils' ideas and focus effectively on improving reading, writing and mathematical skills. In an effective Year 6

mathematics session, a visiting specialist teacher from a local high-performing secondary school, nurtured lower attaining pupils through the identification of the number patterns that form the basis of algebra.

- Staff question well and seek to develop the pupils' use of higher-level vocabulary. In a good Key Stage 1 and 2 mixed-age French lesson, the teacher made very good use of wall displays, resource materials and well-structured questions. As a result, individuals' use of the target language was above that often found in secondary-age pupils.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good despite the constraints imposed by limited outside activity space. Children in the Reception group benefit from mixed-age sessions with older pupils. The children's early reading skills and their knowledge of the sounds that letters make (phonics), develop well in class one to form the basis of the effective progress in reading evident across the school.
- Staff question well and focus on developing the pupils' vocabulary. Nevertheless, opportunities are sometimes missed to develop the pupils' writing by utilising their speaking and listening skills. The choice of resource materials and examples of writing do not always help pupils' understanding.
- Where teaching required improvement it was because staff were trying to do too much within a broad topic and needed to provide a well-focused task that could support learning at a variety of different levels. Not enough good use was made of support staff to provide consistent challenge to small groups of children in the school's mixed-age classes.

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

- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They look after each other at break time, enjoy playing in their mixed-age groups and value the staff supervision.
- Pupils enjoy learning. They take care over their work and often work intently. Talk partner discussion, where pupils share their ideas together, is enthusiastic and brisk. The pupils' positive attitudes to learning are evident in every lesson or group session.
- Pupils were pleased to engage the inspector in conversation, both in and out of the classroom. They are proud of their school and are pleased with the progress they are making.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school. They work cooperatively in class and many show good social skills. The pupils commented that there was no bullying and they were confident that staff would deal with any problems.
- Attendance is above the national average.
- During the inspection, HMI was able to speak with a number of parents who all noted their child was happy and well looked-after. One father took the time to say he had moved his child from another school and was overjoyed with his son's new positive attitude to learning. The carefully managed handover of children at the end of the school day was a model of patient supervision by staff.

**The leadership and management are good**

- The monitoring of teaching by the headteacher is rigorous and consistently accurate. From this secure performance management structure, an effective range of staff development opportunities have driven forward the improvement in teaching and achievement. The headteacher worked alongside HMI in the joint evaluation of teaching and the views she expressed consistently matched the judgements given by the inspector.
- Self-evaluation is robust and the school's actions are carefully planned and effective. The performance management targets set by the governing body for the headteacher, and through her for all staff, are linked to improvements in teaching and provision.
- Staff and pupils have a very positive opinion of the headteacher's leadership. There is effective practice and leadership in all areas of the school that provides capacity to improve further.
- The headteacher communicates well with outside agencies, parents and carers. Effective partnerships have been developed with other local schools, including to confirm the reliability and accuracy of teachers' assessments.
- Pupil premium funds and other resources available to support pupils who find learning difficult or those with special educational needs are combined efficiently. The small number of individual pupils supported in this way are helped to make outstanding progress.
- The way subject-based teaching is organised provides an appropriate range of opportunities for all pupils, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. However, some topics are too broad to be managed effectively in a mixed-age class. For instance, broad topics such as 'sound' are not always taught through carefully chosen examples. The promotion of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through the curriculum is clearly evident; for example, in science, geography and during assemblies. As part of the school's charitable fundraising, HMI observed two Year 6 boys lead an effective presentation on the work of the RSPCA.
- The school has received effective support from a range of professionals provided by the local authority. Governors and the headteacher spoke positively about the support of the human resources team and the special educational needs support service. However, the governing body expressed concerns regarding the withdrawal of funds to support remedial work in the Reception class outside area and other financial matters.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body is strong, well trained and focused on the needs of the community. Governors are fully informed about how the school is performing and provide strong challenge because of the clarity of information available. They set targets for the headteacher, and check carefully how well these are being met. The governing body is knowledgeable and consistently compares the school's progress to national and local standards. Governors make regular visits to the school and understand where teaching is most effective, ensuring that teachers' progress through the pay scales is related to their effectiveness in raising standards. Governors know how the pupil premium funding is being spent and monitor the impact of this and all other spending to ensure that the school budget is being used effectively to help pupils make rapid progress. As the school operates in a listed building rented from the local Helmingham Hall estate, the governing body have sought local authority support to ensure that these costs are not drawn from the money delegated to the school for teaching. The governing body ensures that requirements for the safeguarding of pupils are met.

## 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>	124586
<b>Local authority</b>	Suffolk
<b>Inspection number</b>	425388

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>	65
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mary Graham
<b>Headteacher</b>	Bernie Cleland
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	24 September 2008
<b>Telephone number</b>	01473 890267
<b>Fax number</b>	01473 890977
<b>Email address</b>	admin@helmingham.suffolk.sch.uk



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