

# Horizon Primary Academy

Hilda May Avenue, Swanley, BR8 7BT

## Inspection dates

18–19 September 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	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.

- The headteacher is very well respected by pupils, parents and carers, staff and governors. He leads by example and has built a strong staff team who are proud to be part of the school. Teachers and support staff fully accept their accountability for pupils' progress and work hard to achieve the very best they can.
- The headteacher and staff are highly ambitious for the pupils. Teaching is good and leaders, fully supported by governors, are improving it further. As a result, standards in English and mathematics have rapidly risen from a low base since the school opened as an academy two years ago and pupils attain in line with the national average.
- Pupils have a real pride in their school. They behave well, support each other and value the achievements of all.
- The headteacher and his team know the pupils really well. They value each child as an individual and take time to make sure they do as well as they can.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school. They say teachers make lessons fun and they feel very safe and well cared for. They appreciate the wide range of clubs and trips which the school provides to widen their experience of the world.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- Sometimes teachers' questioning in lessons does not make pupils think hard enough. As a result, pupils do not always develop the necessary skills to learn well on their own. In some lessons teachers do not help pupils understand the features of good work well enough so pupils are unsure of how to achieve their goals as fully as they could.
- Teachers miss some opportunities to correct pupils' handwriting.
- A small group of pupils do not attend school as regularly as they should and therefore do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- Senior leaders make the right recommendations to teachers about how to improve their teaching, but do not always check carefully enough that these are acted upon.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector visited all classes to gain an overview of teaching and learning. The inspector observed seven lessons jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspector heard pupils reading and looked at a sample of workbooks.
- Meetings were held with: the headteacher; the deputy headteacher; members of the senior leadership team; the Chair of the Governing Body; a representative from the academy sponsor; and a group of parents and carers.
- The inspector met with pupils, attended an assembly and observed pupils in the lunch hall and at playtime.
- The inspector took account of 15 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and 16 responses to a staff questionnaire.
- The inspector observed the school's work. A range of documents was scrutinised including those related to the tracking of pupils' progress, the school's records of checks on the quality of teaching, the school's self-assessment, the governing body minutes, behaviour and bullying logs, pupils' attendance records and checks made on staff about their suitability to work with children.

## Inspection team

Amanda Gard, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

# Full report

## Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, including those supported at school action, school action plus and with a statement of special educational needs, is higher than in other schools.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium is well above average. This is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children who are looked after and pupils with a parent or carer in the armed forces.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is similar to the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

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

- Increase the proportion of teaching which is good or better by ensuring teachers always:
  - demonstrate how to achieve well so that pupils know what they need to do to improve their work
  - ask questions which challenge pupils to think hard and work well on their own
  - help pupils to write in a clear joined-up style so their writing is legible and fluent.
- Check that leaders' recommendations to improve teaching are always followed through.
- Redouble efforts to ensure that the attendance of the small group of pupils who miss school too often rises so that overall school attendance is at least in line with the national average.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Children enter the Reception Year at a lower level of development than is typical for their age, especially in language and communication, mathematics and personal development. Teachers set high expectations and establish good routines. Children quickly settle to learning, make good progress and catch up with where they should be by the end of the year so they are well prepared for Year 1.
- Progress in Years 1 and 2 has improved in the last two years and, by the end of Year 2, pupils' attainment is in line with the national average in reading and writing. Progress has accelerated more quickly in mathematics and attainment is above the national average by the end of Year 2.
- Pupils now in Years 3 to 6 did not do well enough in the past. Since the school became an academy they have made up lost ground and their progress is good. By the end of Year 6 attainment in reading and writing is just below the national average and in mathematics is in line with the national average.
- Pupils enjoy reading and make good progress because of good teaching. They enjoy selecting from the school's wide range of interesting books. Effective teaching of phonics (linking sounds and letters) helps all pupils make good progress in reading, but less-able readers need more help to sound out longer words and think about the meaning of the text.
- Pupils enjoy writing in different subjects and are developing the confidence to write for a range of different purposes. Nevertheless, the achievement of higher standards is held back by pupils not developing good handwriting early enough.
- Pupils' good progress in mathematics is supported by the good links made to real-life situations when learning mathematics. For example, pupils visit a local supermarket to compare prices.
- Pupils who join the school and do not speak English are well supported by small-group work and the use of pictures to help them understand what to do. Effective support for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs means these pupils do well.
- The additional funding to support pupils who are eligible for free school meals is used effectively, for example to support disadvantaged pupils to attend school trips. Their attainment when they start is below that of their peers but accelerates so they are only a term behind other pupils by Year 6, and the gap is closing.
- Staff are well focused on setting appropriate challenges for the most able pupils. The proportion of these pupils attaining higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6 is below the national average but rising steadily.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers are aspirational for their pupils. They look carefully to see how well pupils are doing and plan work which meets pupils' needs so that they make good progress in lessons.
- Teachers help pupils to develop a good range of skills in reading, writing and mathematics. They teach creatively, for example combining what pupils learned about code breaking in the Second World War into a mathematics lesson. This helps to hold the pupils' interest and make learning relevant.
- Pupils across the school show positive attitudes to learning. The new approach to homework has encouraged them to participate well, to try hard and want to do their best.
- In the most effective lessons teachers show pupils what they need to do to achieve well. They remind pupils what is expected during the lesson and check progress. In a Year 3 lesson a pupil's work was used effectively to help other pupils think about whether they had met expectations in their own writing. This good practice is not consistent across the school.
- Pupils make best progress in lessons where teachers involve them fully and get them actively engaged. This was seen in a Year 1 lesson where pupils worked hard to count backwards from

20, supported well by a parrot puppet!

- Trips are used well to support lessons. For example, Year 6 pupils focused very attentively on developing skills of inference to find out about a book character, well-motivated by their forthcoming trip to the London Eye to see the book's setting.
- Adults do not always correct mistakes in handwriting made by younger pupils, such as using capital letters in the middle of words. For some pupils, poor handwriting habits continue as they move through the school, including writing more slowly than they should because they have not been taught to join their letters effectively.
- A consistent marking method is used across the school. Pupils understand the system well. They are often encouraged to improve their work by responding to what the teacher has written or trying a set challenge and this helps them to make progress. A small minority of marking is less effective and does not show pupils clearly enough how well they did in the lesson.
- Questioning is often used effectively by teachers to check pupils' understanding. Teaching is not yet outstanding because sometimes teachers do not extend pupils' thinking enough by asking them for detailed responses. On these occasions pupils become more passive learners and do not show as much independence as they could.

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

- Pupils get on well together and treat each other with respect. Adults provide very positive role models and there is a strong emphasis on good relationships and good manners. There is a friendly and calm atmosphere throughout the school.
- Pupils respond very well to the high expectations of them in lessons and around the school. There are clear sanctions for misbehaviour, however the aim of the behaviour policy is rightly to encourage pupils to behave well. Pupils respond enthusiastically to the many awards for good conduct and as a result the number of exclusions for poor behaviour has reduced consistently since the school opened.
- Pupils say they enjoy coming to school. There are high participation rates in the good range of clubs provided after school. Well-selected visitors to school widen pupils' experiences and support spiritual, moral, social and cultural education well. For example, the visit from a police dog and handler supported discussion about right and wrong, and regular assemblies led by a local pastor provide a rich source of spiritual development.
- Behaviour and safety are not outstanding because attendance is below the national average. This is despite the exciting curriculum on offer and notwithstanding the best efforts of the headteacher and his team to work with families of children who attend poorly. The headteacher recognises there is still work to do to ensure these pupils attend well. Staff work effectively with other agencies such as social services where there are welfare concerns.
- Pupils say the headteacher and staff 'take care of us' and so they feel very secure in school. Lessons in each year group focus well on safety in different situations. As a result, pupils understand the dangers of different types of bullying, including those related to prejudice and misuse of the internet. However, they have very few concerns about bullying in school because they say incidences are rare and are dealt with swiftly and effectively by staff. School records back this up.
- Pupils' physical well-being is a high priority for the school. The school uses its allocated sports funding effectively to fund a physical education teacher from a local secondary school to teach lessons across the school. This has already raised standards and developed teachers' confidence to teach this subject well. The focus on high-quality school dinners has seen numbers having them rise dramatically and parents and carers are pleased their children are benefiting from the good choice on offer, stating this is 'a great success'.

### **The leadership and management** are good

- The headteacher has built a cohesive and dedicated staff team which shares his high aspirations for the pupils. One parent or carer commented, 'He has gelled the staff together; they are all really committed to our children.'
  - Senior leaders have a very good understanding of the school's strengths and what improvements are needed. Based on careful development planning with a strong focus on the key areas of teaching and learning, the actions they take ensure that all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, make good progress. They are ambitious for further improvement so that achievement rises further.
  - Senior and middle leaders make accurate judgements about the quality of teaching and plan a well-thought-out range of training opportunities to help teachers improve. This has had a good impact and staff usually act quickly on the advice offered. However, leadership and management are not yet outstanding because on some occasions leaders do not check carefully that previously set targets have been tackled by staff when observing them again.
  - Teachers' individual performance is managed well by leaders and closely linked to their impact on pupils' achievement. Teachers' development targets reflect the high aspirations the school has for pupils' progress.
  - The school develops good relationships with parents and carers and is responsive to their ideas. For example changes were made to the annual report format to make it easier for parents and carers to understand.
  - The academy Trust supports the school well through providing focused training and support from teachers in other schools. This has helped to improve teaching. In addition, an effective partnership with other local primary schools has helped to raise standards in reading.
  - **Governance of the school:**
    - Governors support and challenge the school's leaders effectively. They commission training when necessary to ensure they can ask the right questions, for example on interpreting the school's information about pupils' performance and how it compares to that of other schools nationally. They check carefully how well teaching is improving standards and through performance management link this to checking advances in teachers' salaries. Finances are managed well so that they make a positive difference to pupils, including how the pupil premium grant is spent in supporting eligible pupils. Safeguarding requirements are fully met.
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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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	137136
<b>Local Authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	399876

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Academy sponsor-led
<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>	156
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Neville Gaunt
<b>Headteacher</b>	Chris Ball
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Telephone number</b>	01322 665235
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