

Hever Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Hever, Edenbridge, Kent TN8 7NH

Inspection dates 3 4 October 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 achieve well. Increasing proportions of pupils are making rapid progress, and achievement in mathematics and English at the end of Year 6 rose in summer 2013.
- Teaching over time is good because most activities are carefully planned to meet pupils' needs. Their work is carefully marked, and teachers give helpful suggestions for improvement. Where teaching is best, staff make rapid adjustments to tasks when pupil responses show that this is necessary.
- Governors are well informed and understand how well the school is doing. They are prepared to challenge as well as support school leaders.
- The headteacher understands what needs to be done to further improve the school. Staff and governors share her vision and ambition.
- Pupils speak very positively about their school. They behave well and have a very clear sense of right and wrong. Leaders promote pupils' reflections on behaviour as a high priority and as a result pupils are respectful and treat adults and each other with great courtesy.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is not enough outstanding teaching. Pupils who are capable of making more rapid progress are not always asked questions that make them think deeply about topics. Not all teachers are equally skilled at making rapid adjustments to tasks in lessons if checks on pupil responses show that these would be helpful.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to respond at length to teachers' marking, assess their own work or choose the next steps for improving their own attainment.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed 11 lessons or parts of lessons taught by five teachers. Additional activities included observations during break times, at a school assembly and a lunchtime club.
- One lesson and a series of short visits to a further four classes were observed jointly with the headteacher. Pupils' books were checked with the assistant headteacher to see how well groups of pupils, particularly the most able, are now progressing in a range of subjects.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, representatives of the governing body, subject and senior leaders as well as a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector took account of 30 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) as well as informal discussions with parents. The views of the staff were taken into account through meetings and seven responses to staff questionnaires.
- The inspector listened to pupils read and discussed their choice of reading books.
- The school's own attainment records for the current as well as previous academic years were scrutinised in addition to published information on pupils' achievement. Planning and monitoring documents were examined, as well as records relating to pupils' safety and welfare, including the school's single central record of security checks on staff, the behaviour logs and attendance records.

Inspection team

Patricia MacLachlan, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than the average sized primary school. The Early Years Foundation Stage is provided in a separate Reception class. Other pupils are taught in mixed age groups
- The proportion of pupils eligible for support from the pupil premium is below the national average. This is additional government funding for pupils entitled to free school meals, those in local authority care and those with a parent in the armed services.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well below the national average. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage with small groups having Other White or mixed heritages. The proportion of pupils speaking English as an additional language is much lower than the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported at school action is well below the national average. The proportion supported at school action plus is slightly above the national average and there are very few pupils at present with statements of special educational needs.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school has, since the last inspection, made changes to the leadership team with new appointments to mathematics and literacy leadership roles.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that more is outstanding by:
 - ensuring that pupils are very clear about the connection between the learning planned in their lessons and their target grades, so that they can become more involved in checking their own progress
 - allowing pupils time to respond at length to teachers' marking as well as to identify for themselves and discuss with each other how to improve their attainment levels by deciding upon the necessary next steps
 - training all the adults who work in classrooms to ask questions that stimulate pupils to think more deeply and extend their answers, as well as enlisting the most skilled teachers to show their colleagues how to make frequent checks during lessons and adjust tasks if appropriate.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good.

- Attainment on entry to Reception has been broadly in line with that expected of four year olds nationally. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, the trend is for pupils to make good progress particularly in communication, language and literacy because of a rigorous focus on phonics (letters and the sounds they make). By the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 6 there is an improving trend of attainment in mathematics and English, with standards being above average. The majority of pupils in Key Stage 2 made good progress last year because teaching is good and expectations are high.
- Pupils' attainment in Year 2 has been above the national average for several years. In addition, last year there was a marked improvement in English and mathematics scores in Year 6. School records of current progress as well as scrutiny of pupils' English and mathematics books show that this trend is likely to continue because targets are more ambitious and pupils are producing a higher standard of work than pupils in the past.
- There is little difference in the progress made by different groups. Pupils for whom English is an additional language, those from minority ethnic groups, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs achieve well from their individual starting points.
- The pupil premium grant is used effectively to pay for small-group activities in reading, writing and mathematics. As a result most of the small number of pupils in receipt of this funding, particularly in the lower Key Stage 2 years, are now making the same good progress in English and mathematics and attaining the same scores as their classmates. In addition, last year, the Year 6 pupils in receipt of the grant exceeded their peers' attainment in reading and writing.
- Pupils of all ages enjoy reading and receive good guidance to help improve their skills. Higher proportions of six year olds than the national average meet expected standards in the phonics screening check. Pupils enjoy visiting their well-stocked and comfortable library, and the boys' literacy ambassador club enlists enthusiastic older pupils to read to appreciative younger pupils.

The quality of teaching is good.

- Teaching is good because strong and supportive relationships are established between all adults and pupils in the classroom and pupils are consequently keen to learn. Well planned tasks offer pupils clear opportunities to make progress. For example, in a Year 3 /4 mathematics lesson on polygons, different groups of pupils applied sorting techniques to show their understanding of length and angles. Because the teacher circulated among all groups with probing questions, pupils of all abilities were able to refine and clarify their presentations and enjoy an activity that helped them to make good progress.
- Teachers use assessment information to plan enjoyable tasks that interest the pupils. Tasks are devised for pupils with different abilities, including extension activities for the more able.
- Pupils understand their attainment levels because teachers mark their work clearly and regularly. Teachers, however, do not always give pupils enough time to respond at length to marking, or help pupils to select their own next steps to improve progress over longer periods in all subjects.,.
- Capable subject leaders check teachers' assessment of pupils' progress and ensure that plans for sequences of lessons offer interesting tasks that meet pupils' needs and abilities. Where teaching is best, staff reshape tasks quickly if pupils are not succeeding, to help them to learn at their own pace. However, this is not the case in all lessons and the most skilled teachers have not yet had the opportunity to share this very good practice with their colleagues. Skilled teaching assistants give detailed support to pupils who need additional help to understand tasks.

- Pupils, particularly the most able, are given extension tasks. However, they are not always provided with open-ended challenges or targeted questions that support deep and extended thinking.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage teaching is good because planning is thorough and threads the children's own interests through all areas of learning in both indoor and outdoor settings. As a result the children want to express themselves using well-modelled vocabulary in response to the adults' astute questioning.
- The majority of parents and carers who responded to the online questionnaire (Parent View) believe that their children are well taught and receive appropriate homework.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good.

- Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. This is because pupils work very cooperatively with each other and are resilient in completing tasks. Behaviour is good rather than outstanding because pupils are not always able to identify their next steps for independent working, and as a consequence are not always able to demonstrate exemplary attitudes to learning.
- Pupils feel well looked after by the adults around them. The culture of reflection on behaviour, for example in daily worship, and a climate of mutual friendship, leads to pupils acting considerately and respectfully towards each other and to adults.
- Pupils understand what bullying is and what to do should it occur. They assert that bullying is very rare and dealt with effectively. Parents and carers have expressed satisfaction with the school's good management of behaviour. Pupils have a good awareness of personal safety including cyber safety and respond well when visitors such as police officers run programmes to help them to keep themselves safe.
- Attendance is above the national average because effective strategies are used to encourage good attendance among the very small group of families who find it hard to make sure that their children attend regularly. Parents and carers believe that the school provides a safe and caring environment and inspectors agree. Pupils enjoy coming to school and, as one parent remarked, 'the staff ensure that the children are happy to come into school in the morning and are still smiling when they leave at the end of the day'.
- Pupils know right from wrong and Reception class children are able to defuse arguments rationally, explaining that a companion had not broken apparatus when he 'accidentally pulled the handle'. There are opportunities for older pupils to support younger children by running clubs and acting as 'buddies' in the playground and around the school. Lively displays made by pupils on their charities or house point competitions reinforce moral and social development well.

The leadership and management are good.

- Good leadership and management have ensured that the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection have been successfully addressed. There is now a good balance of child initiated and adult led activities in Reception. Frequent drop-in sessions have been offered to all parents to discuss children's progress to supplement the formal consultation evenings.
- Improvements to the quality of teaching have resulted in a rising trend in achievement. Teaching now engages pupils in interesting tasks that are well matched to their abilities.
- The energetic headteacher has developed a robust system for monitoring teaching, sharing lesson observations with other leaders in the Sevenoaks collaboration of rural schools. This has improved classroom practice. The performance management system ensures that only those teachers who meet required standards move up the salary scale. The headteacher does not avoid difficult conversations about teaching performance if these are necessary.
- Provision to encourage spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. Pupils reflect

on the differences between right and wrong in assemblies and religious or social education lessons. Opportunities to experience sports like basketball, tennis and sitting volleyball are well received as is specialist music tuition, residential visits and participation in area performances and pupil newspapers. In addition to celebrations in the church, pupils lead their own prayers with reverence and visit other faiths' places of worship to widen their social and cultural horizons.

- Physical education classes are supplemented with a wide range of well attended sports clubs and participation in the Tonbridge and West Kent Sports Partnership tournaments along with the gardening club that raises vegetables for sale this is helping all pupils to develop a healthy lifestyle.
- Leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage are good and this has resulted in good progress, particularly in reading. Arrangements for transition from home, for assessment and for teaching in the outdoor area are good.
- Effective safeguarding systems meet statutory requirements and policies are scrupulously applied with governors taking an active role in training for safer recruitment. Leaders promote equal opportunities and are assiduous in tackling any discrimination that may arise.
- The local authority has provided effective support by sharing lesson observations with the headteacher and encouraging collaboration with other rural schools. It has also offered professional development for governors.

■ The governance of the school:

- The governing body knows the standards of achievement and teaching in the school because the headteacher provides regular summary reports. Governors use these to ask challenging questions, supplemented at their meetings with presentations from a monitoring triad of governors who visit the school regularly to attend lessons and to check pupils' books. Governors have an accurate understanding of how pupils are performing compared with national standards because they use the data dashboard reports and some have attended training in tracking pupils' progress in the school. Governors understand the link between teachers' pay progression and pupils' progress because they receive summaries of teachers' performance from the headteacher. Checks are made that the pupil premium funds are spent on the intended groups because the headteacher reports on the impact on attainment made by these funds. Oversight of safeguarding is systematic and the governing body takes a strategic role by checking and monitoring the school development plan.

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	118718
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	426484

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils	411
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	109
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Annabel Lark
Headteacher	Caroline Powell
Date of previous school inspection	67 March 2012
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