

Hoo St Werburgh Primary School and Marlborough Centre

Pottery Road, Hoo St Werburgh, Rochester, ME3 9BS

Inspection dates

10–11 October 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Require improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Pupils in the main school do not achieve consistently well, particularly in mathematics.
- Teaching is not consistently good or better because at times tasks are too easy or too hard for pupils of different abilities. Teachers' marking does not always help pupils move forward in their learning.
- The teaching of mathematics skills is not systematic or rigorous enough. This means that pupils have gaps in their learning and understanding that are not always addressed.
- While important aspects of the school's work are improving, leaders have not secured and sustained consistently good teaching for all pupils over time.
- Plans for improvement are not always precise enough about when action should be taken.
- Leaders do not focus rigorously on how well different groups of pupils in the class are learning when monitoring the quality of teaching.

The school has the following strengths

- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and pupils that attend the Marlborough Centre achieve well. Across the school, pupils make good progress in reading.
- Although few pupils start school working above the level expected for their age, by the time they leave, a similar proportion of more able pupils as seen nationally are reaching the higher levels.
- Teachers engage pupils well in lessons. They also make sure pupils understand how they can use what they are learning in everyday life.
- The school has a very positive and productive atmosphere. Pupils enjoy school and have good attitudes to learning. They feel safe and the range of activities develops pupils' personal qualities and promotes their health and well-being effectively.
- Leaders are moving the school in the right direction and have a clear idea of what to do next.
- Governors provide effective challenge and support for school leaders to bring about necessary improvement.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 25 lessons across all classes, including those in the specially resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs, the Marlborough Centre. Just over one third of these visits to lessons were made with the headteacher or other senior leaders from the school.
- Inspectors examined a wide range of pupils' work, listened to pupils read, and talked to them about their learning and experiences of school.
- They also spoke with parents, staff, three members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of 46 responses to the online survey Parent View. They also considered 31 questionnaires completed by staff.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and reviewed a range of the school's documents, including records of checks on its own performance, the analysis and tracking of pupils' progress, leaders' plans for improvement, safeguarding documentation and the minutes of meetings held by the governing body.

Inspection team

Clive Dunn, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Maureen Coleman	Additional Inspector
Juliet Ward	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much larger than the average-sized primary school.
- It includes a specially resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs, the Marlborough Centre. The provision is for pupils with an autistic spectrum disorder. At present, 59 pupils attend the centre from Years 1 to 6. All have a statement of special educational needs and many have increasingly complex needs.
- Across the school and centre, approximately one quarter of pupils have a statement of special educational needs or are supported at the school action plus level. This is more than three times the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs that is supported at school action is also above average.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives pupil premium (additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, looked-after children and children of service families) is broadly average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set minimum expectations of pupils' attainment and progress.
- A breakfast club is provided.
- The school has experienced a turbulent time since the previous inspection, with approximately 65% of teaching staff changing alongside other difficult circumstances affecting staff.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that it is consistently good or better across Years 1 to 6 in the main school by:
 - making sure pupils of all abilities are properly challenged so that their learning moves on well at their own level
 - focusing marking on improving pupils' learning and always giving pupils the chance to respond
 - sharpening teachers' assessments of pupils' levels by making sure that they are sufficiently well evidenced through pupils' work, and checked and agreed by staff at different levels.
- Accelerate pupils' progress to raise their attainment in mathematics by:
 - making sure that mathematics skills are taught systematically across the school
 - checking that pupils have a secure grasp and understanding of mathematical concepts before moving on.
- Strengthen leadership and management by:
 - embedding systems to more rigorously monitor the impact of actions to check that they are securing improvements rapidly and consistently enough
 - ensuring that plans for improvement always say precisely when actions will be taken
 - making sure that leaders always focus rigorously on the learning of different groups when monitoring the quality of teaching.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils in the main school do not make consistently good progress across Years 1 to 6 and do not always reach the levels that they could by the time they leave, particularly in mathematics.
- While pupils leave Year 6 attaining broadly average levels overall, mathematics lags behind English. Gaps in pupils' mathematical skills sometimes hinder them and teachers do not always ensure that pupils have a secure understanding before moving on.
- Key Stage 2 test results were lower than the school predicted in 2013, although the proportion of more able pupils that reached the higher levels remained close to national figures. Across the school, teachers' assessments of pupils' levels are broadly accurate, but they are not always sufficiently well evidenced against pupils' work to ensure that they are fully robust.
- National comparisons of the school's performance must be used cautiously. Pupils that attend the Marlborough Centre, sometimes 15% of a year group, achieve well because they make good and sometimes better progress. However, their complex needs and low starting points mean that they may not reach the same attainment levels compared with other pupils nationally.
- Pupils who may be disabled or who have with special educational needs in the main school mainly keep pace with their peers but do not make consistently good progress. They are not always given the right tasks to move their learning on at their own level.
- The school has had success in reducing differences between the achievements of different groups of pupils, but this is inconsistent over time. In 2012, pupils that attract pupil premium funding were approximately a term ahead of other pupils at the end of Year 6, and half a term behind in mathematics, a much better picture than seen nationally. These gaps are likely to have widened again compared with those nationally when the 2013 results are confirmed, but across year groups now, these pupils are making quicker progress and catching up with their peers.
- Pupils' work shows that more often they are sustaining quicker progress over time now. They have frequent opportunities across subjects to write for a sustained period to develop their stamina and writing skills.
- Pupils make good progress in reading. Results of the Year 1 phonics screening check (letters and the sounds they make) improved significantly in 2013 and were in line with the national average. Pupils who were previously below the expected standard are catching up and teachers continue to reinforce the use of phonics in Key Stage 2.
- Achievement is good in the Early Years Foundation Stage. From starting points that are below the level of skills expected for their age, children make good progress, particularly with their personal development and communication, language and literacy skills.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Over time, teaching is not consistently good or better from Years 1 to 6 in the main school.
- Teachers do not always make sure that pupils are challenged at precisely the right level to move their learning on more quickly. For example, in a literacy lesson, the teacher used the knowledge she had gained from marking pupils' previous work effectively to change their groups for the next activity. In contrast, in a numeracy lesson, pupils who had previously answered a question correctly went over the concept again alongside pupils who had not.
- Teachers' marking is not fully effective in moving pupils forward quickly in their learning. Sometimes it focuses too much on going back to complete a task rather than developing pupils' skills or understanding. Also, pupils do not always have chance to go back and follow teachers' advice.
- Teachers make sure pupils understand how they can use what they learn in their everyday lives and there are plenty of opportunities for pupils to be actively involved in lessons. This is helping to motivate boys, who are now making quicker progress in Key Stage 2 and catching up with

girls.

- Reading skills are well taught. Pupils learn phonics in a systematic and logical order, while sessions to teach pupils wider reading skills are purposeful and focus precisely on range of specific skills, for example how to use the text to work out the meaning of unfamiliar words.
- Teaching assistants have a positive impact on learning, particularly for pupils with special educational needs, but also sometimes working with more able pupils. They question pupils well to support their learning, checking their understanding rather than just focusing on getting a task finished.
- Teaching is good in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in the Marlborough Centre because adults use their knowledge of individual children well to plan and provide for their next steps. This leads to teaching that is sharply focused on meeting pupils' differing needs within the carefully planned learning environments.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils in the main school and Marlborough Centre work hard and behave well, living up to the school's values and high expectations. The mostly positive views of pupils, parents, staff and governors about behaviour show that this is true over time.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to their learning. Teachers encourage them to be independent, but pupils have not always fully developed these skills. For example, more-able pupils do not always have the confidence to stretch themselves by selecting more difficult work when given the opportunity. This reflects pupils' good, rather than outstanding, learning behaviour.
- Pupils feel safe and develop a strong understanding of how to look after their health, safety and well-being, including through being active or when using the internet. Bullying is rare but pupils have a good understanding of what it is and what to do if it happens.
- The school's thorough record keeping shows incidents of poor behaviour have decreased over time. Rates of exclusion, affecting very few pupils, have also gone down. Leaders deal rigorously with infrequent racist incidents, while promoting a better understanding of discrimination among pupils and families.
- Robust tracking and tackling of absence have reversed a downward trend in pupils' attendance, which is broadly average.

The leadership and management require improvement

- Hindered by a high number of staffing changes, leaders have not secured consistent enough improvements over time to lift the school's overall effectiveness to good.
- Leaders have not always checked and responded quickly and effectively enough to ensure that their actions are making enough difference. They set themselves challenging targets, but not all plans have sufficiently precise timings of when actions will be taken to reach them.
- The school is demonstrating that it has the capacity to improve. Strong leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage and Marlborough Centre has already secured a good quality of education in these areas. Pupils now make good progress in reading and there are clear signs of improving rates of progress in other areas across the school as a result of more good and outstanding teaching. Leaders at all levels have an accurate view of the school's effectiveness and what they need to do next to drive improvement. After a particularly challenging time, the morale of staff and leaders is high.
- The local authority has provided leaders with support and challenge. This has increased the capacity of leaders in school by strengthening the checking systems they use to identify what needs further improvement. These changes are too recent to have secured consistently good practice. When observing lessons, leaders do not always focus sharply on how well different groups of pupils are learning.

- Pupils enjoy the range of subjects they learn, which alongside excellent assemblies support their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. A wide range of varied clubs, visits and activities enrich pupils' experiences, including a residential visit for Year 6 pupils in the main school and Marlborough Centre.
- Additional sports funding has been used wisely to extend existing specialist sports coach provision, providing additional resources and time. Pupils participate enthusiastically in sessions, and an additional sports session before school is already helping these pupils to be better prepared for the start of the day, alongside the popular breakfast club. A proportion of the money is being used for leadership training, using the coach to improve the skills of other staff to ensure that this provision is sustainable.
- The school works hard to involve parents fully in their children's education and school life, reflected in the positive views most express about the school. The recent phonics workshop was very well attended. Leaders are thoughtful in partnerships they make with organisations, always looking carefully to develop links that will make the biggest difference for pupils.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has a detailed and realistic view of pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching, informed by regular visits to school alongside close analysis of achievement data against national benchmarks. It is increasingly rigorous in challenging school leaders to secure necessary improvements. Governors check carefully that spending decisions have the desired impact on lifting pupils' achievement, for example the use of pupil premium funding for individual and small-group teaching in mathematics, and actively seek out further explanation if they do not. Governors have clear plans to monitor the impact of the new sports funding, including through seeking reports from the sports coach. Training for governors has supported this well, leading to a change in the structure of the governing body, reducing its size and bringing a sharper focus. The governing body supports the headteacher in holding teachers to account for consistently good or better teaching and ensuring that there is no automatic pay progression. Robust safeguarding systems ensure the school meets all statutory obligations.

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	118327
Local authority	Medway
Inspection number	426464

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	482
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ian Chappell
Headteacher	Jo Trickett
Date of previous school inspection	18–19 October 2011
Telephone number	01634 338040
Fax number	01634 253893
Email address	office@hoo-st-werburgh.medway.sch.uk

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