

Hermitage Primary School

Hampstead Norreys Road, Hermitage, Berkshire, RG18 9SA

Inspection dates 15–16 October 2013

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Achievement is not good because pupils' progress over time is not good enough, particularly for the more able and boys.
- Some teachers do not have high enough expectations for the most-able pupils who can improve at a faster rate.
- Pupils' literacy skills, particularly in writing, are not reinforced well enough in different subjects.
- Lessons do not always cater well for pupils who require additional support or use the best resources to support them.
- Pupils' work is not consistently marked well in English and mathematics, and pupils have too few opportunities to respond to teachers' comments in their marking.
- Pupils' behaviour is not consistently good when work does not match their needs and behaviour over time is not monitored effectively to enable any issues to be tackled.
- Information about children's learning on entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage is not used well to inform their future learning.
- Leaders do not check on the progress of groups of pupils or the quality of teaching well enough to bring about improvements to ensure all groups are making good progress.

The school has the following strengths

- Recently there has been upward trend of achievement for most groups of pupils.
- There are good opportunities for pupils to use information and communication technology (ICT) in lessons.
- In the better lessons teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and good questioning.
- There are positive relationships between the staff and pupils. Pupils feel safe.
- Support staff are well directed to help pupils learn and make more progress.
- The headteacher has implemented management of performance for teachers and support staff, ably supported by the governing body.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 19 lessons, 10 of which were jointly observed with senior leaders.
- Inspectors considered a range of evidence including the school’s development plan and self-evaluation, monitoring reports, performance management records, policies on child protection and special educational needs, case studies, pupil premium records, the sport premium action plan, attendance records, governing body minutes, safeguarding information, school displays and records relating to behaviour and safety.
- Meetings were held with a group of pupils, the headteacher, the senior leadership team, the Early Years Foundation Stage, mathematics and literacy coordinators, representatives of the teaching assistants, the special educational needs coordinator, the Chair of the Governing Body and other members, and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors attended an assembly, observed a break and a lunch time and an after-school club.
- Inspectors took into account the views of 61 responses to Parent View, the online questionnaire, and the views of staff in 23 questionnaires.
- Inspectors analysed information on pupils’ achievement across the school over the past three years and the school’s own achievement information for different groups.
- Inspectors looked at samples of pupils’ work, listened to a number of pupils read from Year 2 and Year 6 and observed the teaching of phonics.

Inspection team

Jameel Hassan, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Jan Edwards

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Hermitage is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Children join the Early Years Foundation Stage full-time in Reception.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for pupils eligible for free school meals, those looked after by the local authority and those with a parent or carer in the armed services, is above average.
- The vast majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds with a very small number of pupils from various other ethnic backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is extremely low.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is above average. The proportion of those who are supported through school action plus and of those with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- There is no alternative or off-site provision.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school is part of a soft federation of local small schools.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning so more is good or better by:
 - ensuring teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and consistently challenge the most able
 - making sure teachers regularly check on pupils' progress during lessons and then adapt their teaching accordingly so all learn and behave well
 - making sure that marking is consistently good across subjects, particularly in English and mathematics, with comments linked to work completed in lessons and that pupils have time to respond to these comments
 - making sure appropriate resources are used to cater for pupils with particular needs.
- Raise the achievement of all groups of pupils, particularly boys and the more able, by:
 - making sure pupils know their individual targets, especially for writing and mathematics, and what they need to do to meet them
 - ensuring that pupils' literacy skills are reinforced through different subjects
 - ensuring pupils complete suitable tasks matched to their needs to accelerate their learning.
- Improve behaviour and safety by:
 - accurately monitoring trends of behaviour over time to ensure that any issues arising are tackled effectively.
- Strengthen leadership and management by:
 - making sure that the progress of all groups of pupils is checked effectively so they can all make better than expected progress
 - ensuring data gathered on entry to Reception are accurate and that assessment information is used more effectively in the Early Years Foundation Stage for planning work and to track children's progress over time.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement is not good because standards and rates of progress have been too variable over time. While there have been some improvements, according to the school's own data particularly in 2013, standards have been broadly average.
- Children enter the Reception class with levels of skill that are broadly as expected for their age. By the time they leave Reception the majority have made reasonable progress.
- In 2011 and 2012, attainment at Key Stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics was broadly average and, despite a dip in 2012, there was an upward trend in all subjects in 2013. However, boys did less well and fewer than expected of the more-able pupils achieved the higher levels.
- Attainment by the end of Key Stage 2 shows a fluctuating picture over the past few years. In 2012, attainment was below national expectations in reading, writing and mathematics. However, due to recent effective tracking and interventions, school data for 2013 indicate that pupils have done better at all levels in both English and mathematics.
- There is a fluctuating picture of boys' achievement. Boys do less well than girls at both key stages. There have been some improvements but they are not as rapid as they could be to close the gap with the girls. Progress of the more-able boys from Key Stage 1 to the end of Key Stage 2 has not been as rapid as that of the girls.
- At the end of Key Stage 2 in 2011 and 2012, the few pupils entitled to the pupil premium made less progress than their peers in reading, writing and mathematics by almost two years due, in part, to some having additional complex needs. In 2013, inspection evidence shows that the gaps in attainment in both English and mathematics were beginning to narrow.
- At the end of both key stages, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs have not in the past progressed as well as their peers, but there is now an improving picture across both key stages, particularly in mathematics. Teaching assistants provide good support for these pupils across the school. The school makes good use of outside agencies, such as those offering support for autism and speech therapy, to help pupils with specific learning and emotional needs.
- The small number of pupils from different minority ethnic groups and the very few who speak English as an additional language have consistently done well over time.
- In Year 1, in 2012, pupils did not do well in the phonics check, but this issue was addressed in 2013. Phonics (the sounds letters make) is taught regularly. Pupils read widely and often. They have some knowledge of fiction and non-fiction books. The school supports pupils well by making sure individuals have the correct reading book for their level of ability. From Reception onwards, pupils learn the sounds of letters and use them when they read. Reading is monitored to ensure pupils make progress. Interventions are put in place for those who need additional support. There are regular opportunities for pupils to read in school, as well as take a book home so parents can further support progress in reading.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is less than good. It requires improvement because most pupils are not making the progress they are capable of, particularly boys and the most able. Teachers do not always remind pupils of their targets regularly during lessons, especially for writing and mathematics. Consequently, pupils are sometimes unsure how to achieve them.
- In weaker lessons, expectations are not high enough. Teachers' planning and activities do not always fully meet pupils' different learning needs, in particular for boys and the more able, some of whom then become restless and do not remain on task. Teachers do not always provide the best resources, especially to help pupils with special educational needs with their learning. Opportunities to strengthen writing in other subjects are missed as pupils are not reminded of their individual literacy targets during those lessons.
- Where teaching is good, there is a brisk pace and appropriate resources are used. Support from teaching assistants provides one-to-one support for pupils who need additional help, including the more able. Effective questioning develops pupils' thinking and teachers use information on pupils' previous learning well to set suitable activities. In a Year 5 class, ICT was used effectively

by pupils in checking the names of regular shapes. Work was ably supported by teachers' evident good subject knowledge. Discussions included challenging vocabulary, such as polyhedral, vertices, congruence and horizontal, to sort mathematical three-dimensional shapes. The good level of challenge enabled pupils to make good progress.

- Although pupils report that their work is marked regularly, a scrutiny of pupils' books showed there were some weaknesses in marking. Teachers' comments in marking are not always linked to work completed in lessons. Too often pupils have little opportunity to respond to teachers' comments in their marking so as to improve.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- Behaviour is not good because some pupils do not always stay on task in lessons, especially when work does not meet their needs. Systems to tackle low attendance and inappropriate behaviour are in place but there is no effective system to monitor behaviour over time and to check on any trends and issues which need to be tackled.
- Where lessons were good, the behaviour of the pupils was good. In these lessons pupils concentrated and worked well together in groups and pairs attempting to complete their work. They wanted to learn and were keen to be involved, for example in a literacy lesson where role play was used to help pupils learn about the structures of a play. Pupils were able to sustain their concentration and complete their learning tasks in the time given.
- Throughout the school, and outside lessons, behaviour was managed appropriately. There are good relationships between adults and pupils. Pupils who have responsibilities such as prefects make sure school rules are kept by reminding other pupils what they are.
- Pupils report that they feel safe in school. They learn about keeping safe, such as internet safety, road safety, 'stranger danger' and cycling safety. Pupils of all ages have a good understanding of what bullying means and the types of bullying.
- Pupils help others who are less fortunate than themselves, for example by raising funds for charities on a regular basis, and links have been established with a school in Africa.
- Older pupils have opportunities to take on responsibilities around the school and take their roles seriously. House captains, as well as the school council, are democratically elected by their peers. Suitable rewards are in place to support good behaviour, such as house points and 'Star of the week'. Moral values are taught and pupils can recall the values in the school's acronym 'Shine'.
- Pupils are punctual to lessons. Last year attendance was average and currently for this school year it is above average.

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- Leadership is not yet good as not all groups are monitored effectively to see that they are all making the expected or better progress. Full data gathered are not effective when children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage, so are not fully accurate; information is not used well enough in planning and checking on children's progress. Leaders do not check on the progress of different groups or the quality of teaching well enough to bring about improvements to ensure all groups of pupils are making good progress.
- Through the management of performance, teachers' accountability has increased. Teachers have challenging targets to improve their teaching and pupils' learning and salary progression is linked to rates of pupil progress.
- The local authority has been very involved with the school, supporting senior leaders and the development of good practices across the school. Senior leaders understand what good teaching looks like and they regularly monitor the general progress of pupils across the school. Training is provided using the school's own and the federation's expertise.
- Senior leaders use the new sport funding purposefully to improve teachers' skills in teaching physical education. Pupils have good opportunities to develop a healthy lifestyle and improve

their physical well-being. Pupil premium funding is used to support those who are entitled to it.

- The curriculum provides opportunities for pupils to extend their experience. Although there are some opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy skills in other subjects, it is not consistent enough. Residential trips take place, for example to Wales and Wantage, along with visits to places of interest, such as museums to support work in history and learning about Tudors, Victorians and the Second World War. Clubs of various kinds including judo, netball, football and model making are regularly attended. Pupils take part in competitions in music and sport.
- Parents have an opportunity to be involved in the school through the parents' association and as members of the governing body. There are regular parents' evenings for them to update about their child's progress.
- The school meets the statutory requirements for safeguarding.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body challenges and supports school leaders. Governors have the appropriate expertise to support the school. They understand the teachers' performance standards and ensure that teachers' work is monitored. They hold the headteacher fully to account for ensuring that staff salaries and their performance are closely linked. They are well informed about the key issues facing the school and have been actively involved in planning for the future. Governors have attended local authority training which has helped them form an accurate view of the school's performance and the quality of teaching. They know that some the progress of some groups of pupils needs to improve. They take their responsibilities seriously and visit school other than for meetings, such as for learning walks around the school. Governors have overseen the allocation of the pupil premium and new sport funding. With the support of the local authority, they lead the headteacher's performance management and have given her robust targets, attempting to ensure equal opportunity for all.

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	109815
Local authority	West Berkshire
Inspection number	427261

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	203
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Emma Derby
Headteacher	Peta Collicott
Date of previous school inspection	29–30 September 2013
Telephone number	01635 200355
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