

# The Hill Primary School

Peppard Road, Caversham, Reading, Berkshire, RG4 8TU

**Inspection dates** 13–14 November 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.

- Most pupils, including the most-able pupils, make good progress from their starting points on entry to the school. Attainment by the end of Key Stage 1 has risen steadily since 2010 and has been consistently above average.
- Following a dip in attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2013, achievement has improved and is now good. Pupils currently in Year 6 are on track to reach above average attainment in national tests at the end of the year, a continuation of the upward trend of previous years. Progress in all key stages is good and all groups achieve well.
- Disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and the small numbers known to be eligible for free school meals, make good progress because the school takes exceptionally good care of individuals, particularly those who circumstances make them more vulnerable.
- Pupils are very proud of their school and feel safe within its walls. They behave well in lessons and around the school and older pupils take the lead in looking after younger ones.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development outstandingly well. Music and the arts are particularly very well promoted.
- Pupils are excited by the well planned and vibrant topics which teachers plan for them and love learning in the vibrant outdoor area.
- The headteacher, other leaders and governors are strongly committed to ensuring the best education and wider opportunities are provided for all pupils. They are ambitious for the school and successful in maintaining good achievement and teaching.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils are not yet making outstanding progress over time because there is not yet sufficient outstanding teaching, and a small number of lessons still require improvement.
- Progress in writing, although good, is not as strong as in reading or mathematics.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in 24 lessons, including eight that were observed jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and visited classrooms with senior staff to look at how well disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs were learning. Inspectors also visited lessons with senior staff to look at pupils' progress in mathematics and English and at learning in a wide range of other subjects.
- Discussions were held with senior and subject leaders, staff, the Chair of the Governing Body and four other members, a representative of the local authority and groups of pupils.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at its self-evaluation and planning documents, external evaluations of its work and examples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors took note of the 217 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). Written comments made by parents were also considered. Inspectors also analysed the responses to inspection questionnaires returned by 18 staff.

## Inspection team

Michael Merchant, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Elizabeth Cole

Additional Inspector

Kusum Trikha

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Just over a quarter of all pupils are from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium (additional funding from the government for some groups of pupils, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, those in the care of the local authority and those with a parent in the armed services) is low.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is broadly average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment.

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

- Improve teaching so that more is outstanding so that pupils make consistently rapid progress in all year groups and attainment rises further, especially in writing, by making sure that:
  - all teachers plan tasks that get the very best out of all pupils, especially the more-able pupils in their class
  - all pupils respond to the very helpful marking provided by teachers
  - all teachers consistently use questions in lessons which prompt all pupils to think deeply and give full answers
  - pupils are given more chances to write at length about a wider range of topics.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

**is good**

- Pupils join the school in the Reception class with skills and abilities that are generally just above those typical of their age. Children settle into the Reception classes quickly, are keen to learn, play together well and are well behaved. By the end of Reception almost all children are busy and determined learners and are exceeding the levels of development expected for their age.
- All groups of pupils, including those from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language, make good progress overall in reading, writing and mathematics as they pass through Key Stage 1.
- Progress through Key Stage 2, although good, has not been consistently strong for all subjects, including writing, and achievement fell in 2013 after a sustained period in which it had been rising. However, achievement has improved in response to better teaching and stronger support for pupils the school has identified as underachieving. Current Year 6 pupils are on track to exceed national averages for attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils' achievement in writing is weaker than in their other subjects because pupils are not always given enough chances to write long pieces of work on a wide range of topics.
- By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment, overall, is above that typical of their age group. Most pupils make particularly impressive gains in reading. Very well considered and highly effective reading support starts in Year 1 for any pupils who need it. As a result, pupils read and speak with increasing confidence as they move up the school. The school's information shows that most pupils are currently working at reading levels that are, on average, over a year ahead of where most pupils typically are nationally.
- This fast pace of learning reflects the success of the school's commitment to ensuring that all pupils should have an equal opportunity to succeed, and that there is no discrimination.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make progress in line with other pupils. Staff are very well aware of these pupils and of their differing needs. Teachers and teaching assistants give well-targeted support that develops their learning and independence. Boys are achieving similarly to girls, having caught up on previous weaker performance.
- The small numbers of pupils supported by the pupil premium funding attain less well than others in the school. In 2013, for instance, such pupils were two terms behind others in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6. However, all of these pupils make good progress in relation to their starting points when they joined the school midway through Key Stage 2.
- The school has used its pupil premium funding to introduce a range of measures, such as one-to-one tuition and additional staffing in some classes, to help eligible pupils. As a result, those supported by this additional government funding are currently making similarly good progress as their peers in all year groups.
- All parents spoken to, and nearly all of the very high number who completed Parent View, are entirely satisfied with the progress their children are making.

### The quality of teaching

**is good**

- Teaching has a positive impact on pupils' progress over time so that pupils achieve well. Teachers and teaching assistants provide pupils with work which is exactly what they need to make progress. Almost all parents believe that teaching is good. There is some outstanding teaching, but not yet enough to ensure exceptionally good progress across all year groups and subjects.
- Teachers have well-established, positive relationships with pupils, so that pupils are calm, settled and ready to learn. Pupils are keen to meet teachers' high expectations of behaviour and learning.
- Lessons are challenging for most pupils. Learning is well planned and builds on what pupils have

learned before, including where gaps need to be filled. Teachers' questions often deepen pupils' understanding and ability to think more widely about a problem. In a few lessons this is not the case and pupils are not encouraged to use their imagination or think deeply about issues.

- Teaching assistants guide and question pupils effectively, particularly disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. They help these pupils to make good progress alongside developing their ability to learn independently.
- Where teaching is not yet outstanding, learning is held back because teachers do not get the most out of every pupil, since all pupils complete the same task and these are not always hard enough for the more-able pupils.
- Pupils' progress is assessed accurately and regularly. As a result, any underperformance is recognised quickly and extra support, often given by teaching assistants, helps get pupils back on track quickly.
- Pupils' work is marked frequently and pupils benefit from accurate and pertinent guidance on how to improve their work. However, some teachers do not always check to see that pupils are acting on this strong advice.
- The curriculum, planned around topics that excite and interest pupils, helps them enjoy the chance to find out things for themselves. The school makes exceptionally good use of its extensive outdoor, wooded area to develop imaginative and highly motivational ways to encourage pupils to learn actively. Excellent learning was seen during a Year 5 art lesson when pupils were prompted to search for materials that they then assembled into collages to represent aspects of their community. Year 4 pupils greatly extended their knowledge of the Second World War when they role played escaped prisoners and laid code-breaking trails in their woodland.

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

**are good**

- The vast majority of pupils have positive attitudes towards their learning. They respond very well to the effective systems the school uses to manage behaviour. Pupils are invariably polite, courteous and friendly, offering help and assistance to visitors and other pupils.
- Strong provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development contributes to their consistently good, and often impeccable, behaviour around the school and in enrichment activities and assemblies. Pupils develop very well as articulate, courteous and considerate young people, extremely well aware of how to lead safe and healthy lives.
- Pupils say they feel very safe in school, and if they have a problem they know they can talk to an adult who will help them solve it.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the different forms of bullying and say that the use of racist or unkind language is extremely rare. If it does occur, pupils say they are confident that it will be 'stamped out' by staff.
- The school actively encourages all pupils to express their individuality. Pupils from different cultural and religious backgrounds get on very well together and appreciate the harmonious and tolerant climate created in the school.
- Attendance is currently above average and is improving for all groups of pupils. Most pupils come to school regularly and are punctual.
- Behaviour is not yet outstanding because in some lessons pupils can be passive and over-reliant on the teacher, and in a few lessons are less enthusiastic in their learning.

### **The leadership and management**

**are good**

- The committed headteacher, governors and leaders are highly ambitious for the school. They are successful in their drive for continual improvement in pupils' achievement and in the quality of teaching.
- The impact of middle leaders is greatly improving. They now take the lead in developing the areas for which they are responsible. One commented, 'It is a pleasure to be part of the team at

this school.' Staff feel supported by senior leaders, but also that arrangements for managing their performance hold them rigorously to account.

- Leaders are successful in improving teaching and achievement as a result of a well-planned approach to training and professional development. Staff work supportively together on developing well-considered approaches to learning and teaching that are often underpinned by the philosophy of learning through adventure. The school works well in partnership with other schools to improve teaching.
- Leaders evaluate the school's performance accurately because checks on teaching are rigorous and pupils' progress and personal development are closely tracked. Information on pupils' progress, attendance and behaviour is analysed precisely so that senior leaders have a full view of how pupils are performing throughout the year.
- The school has used the new primary sport funding effectively to improve the quality and breadth of physical education and sport provision. The range of after-school sports clubs has been extended and specialist staff employed to improve pupils' expertise in different sporting activities. There has been increased participation in sporting activities.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet requirements.
- The local authority has deemed that this successful school is in need of only light touch support. It has provided a suitable balance of challenge and support to help the school improve.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Members of the governing body bring a wide range of experience and expertise to their role. They have been highly influential in the long-term development of the school. They are well informed of pupils' performance in relation to the national picture. They are fully aware of the performance of teaching and support staff and both challenge and support decisions on movements up the salary scale. They set high expectations of the headteacher and provide an appropriate balance of challenge and support. They know how pupil premium funding has been spent and the impact it is having on eligible pupils. They seek, and benefit from, appropriate training.

## 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>	109788
<b>Local authority</b>	Reading
<b>Inspection number</b>	426567
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	436
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mike Lambden
<b>Headteacher</b>	Dawn Cox
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	18 September 2008
<b>Telephone number</b>	0118 9375560
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