

Hillsgrove Primary School

Sidmouth Road, Welling, DA16 1DR

Inspection dates

14–15 November 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		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Although there is some exceptional teaching, there is not enough consistently good teaching at present to enable pupils to make rapid progress. Lessons do not always provide sufficient challenge for all pupils.
- Standards in writing at the end of Year 2 and in reading at Year 6 are not high enough. Reading has not been given enough priority in Years 3 to 6.
- Older pupils do not make as rapid progress in mathematics as they do in writing through Years 3 to 6.
- While provision for pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs has improved, their progress remains inconsistent across the school.
- The skills of current outstanding practitioners are not sufficiently utilised as mentors and role-models for less experienced colleagues who need additional support to improve their practice.
- Established whole-school systems for checking pupils' understanding are not consistently implemented across the school.

The school has the following strengths

- With effective support from the local authority, the current leadership team has significantly improved many aspects of the school after a significant dip in its performance. Leadership is now a strength.
- Standards rose at the end of Year 6 in 2013 and are now above average. The teaching of writing in Year 6 is a strength. Progress in writing in 2013 was outstanding.
- Provision in the specialist unit is now good.
- Pupils supported by the pupil premium funding make mostly good progress.
- Pupils enjoy school and feel safe. Behaviour and attitudes to learning are good.
- Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage has improved and children make good progress in developing their early learning.
- Governance has improved. Governors now feel more confident in challenging school leaders in relation to pupils' performance and teachers' effectiveness.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 25 lessons, six of which were seen together with school leaders.
- Meetings were held with a group of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body, the school's senior and subject leaders and two representatives of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 32 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and also looked at the school's own recent survey of parental views.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of school documentation, including records of school checks on the quality of teaching, the school improvement plan and records relating to behaviour, attendance, safeguarding and the tracking of pupils' progress. They also looked closely at pupils' written work from the current and previous school years, and listened to pupils reading.

Inspection team

George Logan, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Janet Tomkins

Additional inspector

Diane Rochford

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Hillsgrove Primary School is a larger-than-average primary school.
- The large majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. There is a small but stable group of pupils of Black African heritage.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is slightly above average.
- The school offers specialist provision for eight pupils with autistic spectrum disorder. These pupils are identified by the local authority and all have statements of special educational needs.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium (additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, those in local authority care and those from other groups) is broadly average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment in English and mathematics.
- The school offers a breakfast and an after-school club. These are managed and inspected separately. There is a Children's Centre on site. This is also separately inspected.
- Hillsgrove Primary has been in formal collaboration with Old Bexley Church of England Primary School since April 2012. While the two schools have retained independent governing bodies, one executive headteacher has oversight of the two schools, with separate heads of school on each site. The current head of school took up post in April 2012.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching across the school so that a greater proportion is good or better by ensuring that:
 - recently appointed staff have the necessary additional training to fulfil all aspects of their role
 - highly effective teachers already on the staff have more opportunity to influence and nurture the practice of less experienced colleagues
 - lessons provide a high level of challenge for all pupils, avoiding over-long introductions which limit pupils' opportunities to complete tasks set
 - teachers plan work which is appropriately matched to pupils' needs, and set higher expectations so that all pupils can make good progress and achieve well
 - assessment systems are consistently implemented across all classes.
- Raise standards and strengthen achievement, by ensuring that:
 - there is a consistent and effective approach to the development of pupils' skills in reading, particularly in Years 3 to 6
 - current improved practice in monitoring and supporting the achievement of pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs is consistently implemented across the school so that their progress, particularly in Years 3 to 6, is more rapid.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Standards in tests at the end of Year 6 stayed at the same level for the four years up to 2012, while national standards rose in this period. Provisional results for 2013 show significant improvement. However, standards in reading still remained broadly average and too few pupils reached the higher Level 5.
- Despite recent improvements, pupils' progress in English and mathematics, particularly in Years 3 to 6, has not been sustained or consistent enough for achievement to be judged good. Progress in mathematics in 2012 was weak. However, provisional data for 2013 shows that progress in mathematics has improved and was outstanding in writing, with the proportion of pupils achieving the higher Level 5 above average in both areas.
- While above average in reading and mathematics, standards in writing at the end of Year 2 are broadly average. Other than in writing, the proportion of pupils attaining the higher Level 3 is above national figures. Overall, standards at Year 2 have recovered, following a dip in 2012.
- The gap between the attainment of Year 6 pupils supported by pupil premium funding and their peers has continued to reduce, so that, in 2013 they were equivalent to around one term behind the others in English and mathematics. Funded pupils in Year 6 make more rapid progress than the others. In 2013 the attainment of Year 2 pupils supported by pupil premium funding exceeded that of their peers.
- The teaching of phonics (the linking of sounds and letters) is satisfactory. An above-average proportion of Year 1 pupils attained the expected standard in the phonics screening check in 2013. Younger pupils receive a systematic grounding in these skills, although not all teaching demonstrates a secure grasp of the strategies. Mostly good progress in reading in Years 1 and 2 is not sustained as effectively in Years 3 to 6.
- The progress of older more-able pupils has improved. More pupils access the Level 6 tests in mathematics and English. Fast-track groupings in Year 6 are contributing to accelerated progress. However, the match of work to the needs of more-able pupils elsewhere is less well developed.
- Children mostly enter Nursery with skill levels below those found nationally. Few of these children continue to Reception. Entry levels to Reception are close to those expected. Improved provision ensures that children make good progress and achieve standards slightly above the national average.
- Pupils come to lessons keen to learn. They make the most progress when teachers build upon this effectively and make lessons exciting and fast-paced.
- Provision for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs has improved recently, although younger pupils still tend to make the best progress. Tracking systems have improved and provide a closer overview of progress. A range of support programmes facilitate increasingly rapid progress.
- Black African pupils, though few, consistently achieve well, attaining significantly above their peers nationally.
- Provision in the specialist unit is good. It successfully supports both the nurturing and the academic progress of the whole individual. Unit leaders are now accumulating data on pupils' progress, so that they can more accurately identify gaps.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching and progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage are good and there are pockets of outstanding teaching in Key Stage 2. However, despite recent improvements, there is still not enough consistently good or better teaching, particularly in Years 1 and 2, to ensure that pupils make sustained good progress. There have been several recent staff changes. Not all staff are

fully established in their current roles.

- Teachers' expectations are not always high enough. Tasks planned do not provide a consistently high level of challenge for all pupils. Some lessons have over-extended introductions, leaving insufficient time for pupils to work independently, practising their skills.
- While the teaching of reading successfully develops pupils' reading skills initially, progress in reading for the older pupils is not rapid enough. Not all staff promote a culture of reading and the enjoyment of books and literature with sufficient expertise and conviction.
- There have been improvements in the checking and supporting of pupils' progress, although there is some inconsistency in implementation between classes. The marking of writing in English mostly identifies what pupils need to do next to improve. Staff are beginning to follow this good practice in other subjects. Recent whole-school systems encourage pupils to evaluate their understanding and to respond to marking. Although handwriting is not consistently well formed, there are common approaches to the presentation of written work.
- Increased awareness and more effective support have contributed to better provision for pupils supported by pupil premium funding. As a result, their achievement is improving.
- The school has a substantial core of highly talented teachers. Year 6 pupils were observed in two highly successful writing lessons, developing alternative versions of a text, with pupils grouped according to their prior learning. Both lessons provided significant challenge, with high-quality writing for pupils to model. Expectations were high, behaviour was outstanding and pupils' gains in learning were rapid.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage benefit from good teaching, leading to good progress. Language and social skills are promoted well.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' behaviour is good. Procedures for managing behaviour are consistently applied and effective. Pupils' conduct outside the classroom is good. There has been a marked decline in incidents of poor behaviour, with few recorded events recently and only one fixed-term exclusion.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are positive. They work well independently and respect each other. In the better lessons, pupils demonstrate high levels of engagement. However, when teachers' expectations are less high, pupils begin to disengage.
- Low-level disruption is infrequent. Pupils feel safe in school and are certain that adults will resolve any difficulties. Parents and carers who offered their views had no concerns about behaviour.
- Pupils feel that bullying is rare. However, they know that bullying may take different forms and appreciate, for example, the risks associated with the internet. School records indicate that incidents are fully addressed.
- Pupils have a good appreciation of day-to-day risks. Older pupils understand how to keep themselves safe and are well prepared for secondary school.
- Attendance is broadly average, but improving steadily. Persistent absence is negligible.

The leadership and management are good

- Local authority monitoring in 2011 identified a range of inadequacies in the school's work, in teaching, achievement and behaviour. Urgent steps were taken to address these shortcomings. A series of formal reviews was initiated to monitor subsequent progress. The reorganisation of leadership, and significant staff changes, set a new direction for the school.
- Current leaders and managers have successfully improved the quality of teaching through the appointment of several highly skilled teachers, so ensuring that pupils' achievement is now improving strongly. Supported by the local authority, significant improvements have also been achieved in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in the specialist unit, in middle leadership and

in assessment. Capacity for further improvement is good.

- Systems for the management of teachers' performance are, overall, appropriately linked to teachers' salaries. Competence and pay progression are now more closely aligned. That said, the past monitoring of teaching has not always been sufficiently focused on achievement.
- The school's evaluation of its own performance is generally accurate and rightly identifies the significant recent improvements.
- Effective leadership of the specialist unit, and of the provision for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, has had a positive impact on progress, although leaders have only recently started to gather longer-term progress data. Key subject leaders are now clear as to what improvements are needed.
- The range of subjects taught meets pupils' needs increasingly well. Clear policies and procedures support the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics. The curriculum is enhanced by visits, visitors and events and many extra-curricular activities.
- Although it is early to evaluate the impact, the school has a sustainable plan to improve the quality of sports coaching and pupils' health through the development of staff skills – including those of the midday supervisors – in coaching physical education, and to increase participation in after-school sport.
- The school has received good support from the local authority. This has contributed strongly to the improvements achieved.
- The impact of pupil premium funding is now monitored closely, with good gains in learning evident for eligible pupils.
- Pupils' social and moral development is good. Older pupils act as learning mentors. There are many opportunities for cooperation in learning. Cultural development is promoted through the celebration of various faiths and, recently, Black History Month. Clubs offer many opportunities in the creative arts. Links with parents and carers are good.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors contribute well as link governors. They bring a range of professional experience and undertake additional training to improve their skills. Although very knowledgeable about the school's priorities, governors recognise that they have, until recently, been less confident in challenging school leaders about pupils' progress. This is now improving. Most governors now have an understanding of data and can carefully compare pupils' attainment with national figures. Governors ensure equality of opportunity, tackle discrimination and promote good relationships. They have a good understanding of the quality of teaching. Pay and promotion are now more securely linked to teachers' effectiveness. Governors evaluate the impact of decisions about the use of pupil premium funding to close gaps in pupils' achievement. They ensure, along with senior leaders, that safeguarding arrangements meet national requirements. All other statutory duties are met.

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	101408
Local authority	Bexley
Inspection number	425610

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	441
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Simms
Headteacher	Peter Wilson (executive head), Peter Rhodes (head of school)
Date of previous school inspection	30 September 2008
Telephone number	020 8303 4949
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