

Hodnet Primary School

Shrewsbury Street, Hodnet, Market Drayton, TF9 3NS

Inspection dates 21–22 November 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.

- Significant improvement in the quality of teaching since the previous inspection has been key to improvements in pupils' achievement, which is now good.
- Children in Reception make good progress in their understanding of letters and numbers and also in their physical, social and personal skills.
- Standards are rising.
- Pupils who are on the school roll throughout Years 5 and 6 make good progress. The progress of the most able pupils is above the national average.
- Teachers make lessons interesting, linking work across subjects. They question pupils well and mark their work effectively.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school and there are rigorous systems in place to ensure all pupils are safe.
- The school works closely with parents, particularly on attendance, which has improved over time and is now average.
- The leadership and management of the headteacher and governors are good and they have created a team of highly effective leaders in all areas of the school's work.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Activities in lessons are not always matched tightly to the abilities of pupils.
- Not all pupils currently in Key Stage 2 have a good grasp of spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- Teachers do not always move pupils on to independent work in lessons quickly.
- While school leaders regularly examine the progress pupils are making, formal checks are not always frequent enough to spot any early signs of underachievement.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 12 lessons, three of which were seen together with the headteacher. In addition, the inspection team looked at pupils' work in their books and listened to them read.
- There were meetings with groups of pupils, senior leaders, and representatives of the governing body and the local authority.
- Inspectors talked to parents at the end of the school day and considered the 15 responses to a staff questionnaire. Inspectors also took account of the 39 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents.
- The inspection team examined: the school's own data on pupils' recent and current progress; planning and monitoring documentation; records relating to behaviour and attendance; and documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Richard Boswell, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Timothy McGuire

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Hodnet is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The school has an unusually high proportion of pupils in all year groups joining or leaving the school throughout the year. For example, at least 15% of the pupils in Years 5 and 6 joined the school during those year groups.
- Over a third of the teaching staff have been appointed in the last two years. Since the last inspection the headteacher and governing body have created a new leadership team including a deputy headteacher and subject leaders.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for certain groups such as pupils in local authority care and those known to be eligible for free school meals, is below the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make more teaching outstanding, by:
 - moving pupils on quicker in lessons to doing independent work and thinking for themselves
 - ensuring that different activities, matched precisely to the needs of all pupils, always offer full challenge in lessons.
- Make sure all pupils, particularly those currently in Key Stage 2, have a good grasp of the basic skills of spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- Make more frequent use of the reviews of the progress that pupils are making.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- The level of skills and understanding of children entering Reception varies from year to year from below to broadly in line with those expected for their age.
- Progress is good in Reception. In 2013 the large majority of children reached the standards in literacy and numeracy expected for their age when they joined Year 1. Children also make good progress in their physical development and in the development of their personal and social skills.
- Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are now above average. The quality of teaching has improved and this has led to rapid and significant improvement in the last three years with all pupils reaching the expected standard in reading in the last school year and the vast majority in writing and mathematics.
- Progress in reading and mathematics in Key Stage 1 is good. Pupils' writing is an area that the school has identified for particular improvement. Although pupils exceeded the national average in the Year 1 check on letters and the sounds they represent (phonics) in 2012, this was not the case in 2013. However, outstanding teaching in phonics was observed during the inspection and pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 are now making rapid progress in this area.
- There have been variations in the proportions of pupils making expected progress in English and mathematics in Key Stage 2 over the last three years. These are explained by the difference, in a small school, that one or two pupils make to the school's results and the arrival of pupils who have spent part of the key stage elsewhere. The proportions making expected progress have been close to the national average in the last two years. The proportion of pupils exceeding the expected progress in reading and writing has been broadly in line with that found nationally. In mathematics it has been above that found nationally.
- Pupils who are on the school roll throughout Years 5 and 6 make good progress and the progress of the most able pupils is above the national average.
- Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 have remained below the national average, but they represent good progress from the below average standards pupils had when they entered the key stage. Pupils currently in Key Stage 2 are reaching higher standards in much of their work. However, older pupils in Key Stage 2 still reveal occasional gaps in their knowledge from previous years, particularly in spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- Pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium make similar progress to other pupils in both English and mathematics. No judgement is made about the attainment of these pupils in Year 6 in 2013 because the very small number of pupils would mean individuals could be identified. The school uses pupil premium money to subsidise and to fund additional staffing for successful one to one and small group support.
- The school works hard to tackle discrimination and to promote equal opportunities. This is evident in the additional support it gives to any groups of pupils who may be disadvantaged by, for example, inconsistent attendance.
- Pupils who have special educational needs make similar progress to their peers. Any needs are swiftly identified on entry to the school and an individual programme of learning is developed to support pupils, which is shared with parents. The local authority has recognised with an award

the good provision for this group of pupils.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching has improved since the last inspection, and this is reflected in the good progress of current pupils. Inspectors saw only good and outstanding teaching during the course of the inspection, which reflects the school's own assessment of the quality of teaching over time. Good teaching was also confirmed by a scrutiny of pupils' books from the last school year, taken from the classes of current teachers.
- Consistently good teaching is helping pupils to achieve well in many subjects, including English and mathematics. Teachers are particularly aware of the extra barriers to learning that some pupils, such as those with special educational needs or those supported through the pupil premium, face. They make sure that teaching assistants are used effectively to support higher-attaining pupils so they can give the additional support that the more vulnerable pupils need to ensure that they achieve well over time.
- Relationships between pupils and staff are strong and expectations are usually high but realistic. Occasionally a few more-able pupils are insufficiently challenged while a few lower-attaining pupils struggle with the work they are set. This is because teachers do not always provide different activities that are precisely matched to the varying needs of their pupils.
- Teaching in Reception is good with teachers working closely with support staff. The teacher's planning, for example, is on the classroom wall and both teacher and support staff make notes against it during the course of the school day in order to adapt and shape the next day's teaching according to the children's progress. Other local schools have visited the class to observe the good quality of teaching.
- Pupils are enthusiastic about reading and proudly showed inspectors the new school library. Teachers make good use of guided reading time and current pupils are making good progress in their literacy.
- Teachers make good use in literacy and numeracy lessons of themes and subjects studied in history or science to create interesting and stimulating lessons. For example, in one Year 3 lesson the teacher reminded pupils that Henry VIII not only 'chopped off heads' but was also a scholar and that he would 'not have liked short sentences'. The imminent visit to the school of an actor playing the role of Henry added urgency to the pupils' writing of longer sentences.
- Good use is made of the school's outdoor spaces for learning not only by Reception but also by older pupils. Pupils' attitudes to learning are well promoted, particularly through the Forest Schools programme in which pupils are encouraged to be more independent. For example in a Year 1 lesson, pupils worked in groups, identifying repeating patterns in autumn leaves. This independence and resulting rapid progress is not always seen in the classroom, particularly on occasions when teachers do not give pupils enough opportunity early in the lesson to think for themselves.
- Teachers use questioning well, drawing out longer answers from pupils and expecting them to reflect on their work and review it in order to make improvements. Pupils do this well, taking time to look at the teacher's marking of their work both on their own and with their learning partners. Homework is regularly set and marked and projects are planned to involve parents.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' behaviour in lessons is good. They show good attitudes to learning and the ability to concentrate for longer periods of time as they move up the school. This has had a positive impact on their progress, for example in developing their skills in extended writing.
- The school offers strong support to pupils and families whose circumstances may make them vulnerable. School records show that pupils with more challenging behaviours are given the support and self-confidence to continue to make progress with their work.
- Pupils show pride in their school and respect for staff and each other. One pupil commented to an inspector that the school was 'like a big family'. Pupils are well behaved around school and feel they are listened to and given responsibilities such as being voted by their peers to be on the school council or to be 'eco-warriors'.
- The school actively promotes the physical well-being of pupils. They enjoy the wide variety of sports at school and are aware of the importance of diet and exercise. They are also aware of staying safe and spoke to inspectors about the lessons learned from a recent 'e-safety week'. In one Year 4 lesson on making electrical circuits, pupils showed knowledge of potential electrical hazards in the home.
- Pupils are aware of how to deal with bullying or racism, should they encounter them, but these were not considered to be issues by pupils. Parents also gave overwhelmingly positive responses regarding behaviour to the online questionnaire, Parent View, as did staff in responses to their questionnaire.
- The rate of pupils' attendance steadily improved from 2010 to 2012. Absences increased in 2013, largely due to extreme weather. Attendance for the first half of the autumn term 2013 is above the same period for the previous year. The school has worked hard with families to increase the consistency of pupils' attendance.

The leadership and management are good

- The school has improved since the last inspection because of clear-sighted and determined leadership. The headteacher has high expectations, which she communicates clearly. She knows what the school needs to do next in order to improve further and expects everyone to do their best. She has made some tough decisions in order to improve the school's performance. All of the areas identified in the last inspection have been addressed.
- The headteacher, working closely with the governing body and well supported by the local authority, has appointed a strong and capable leadership team. They have excellent knowledge of their subjects and are able to give teachers advice about how to improve the quality of their teaching.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage (Reception class) is well led and this makes the move from pre-school to Reception as smooth as possible. Children's needs and abilities are accurately assessed and they are well prepared for beginning Key Stage 1 as confident, co-operative and independent learners.
- School leaders are clear about the strengths of the school and areas for improvement. The tracking of pupils' progress throughout the school has become sharper since the last inspection and this has helped to identify underachievement and so improve pupils' progress. Formal

reviews of progress are regular but not always frequent as nearly a term can go by between them. This means potential problems are not always identified early.

- The quality of teaching is now good and sometimes outstanding because of regular monitoring and continuous evaluation. Any underperformance has been tackled and teachers are clear about the links between their pupils' achievement and progression on the teachers' pay spine.
- The headteacher has used training opportunities to encourage high expectations and to give models of best practice in the classroom. As a result three of the school's new leaders have been promoted from within the school. The recently appointed deputy head teacher has already made an impact on the quality of teaching both in her own Year 2 class and through the immediate adoption by other staff of strategies she has suggested.
- The school's use of engaging and interesting topics gives clear contexts to pupils' work. For example, they may be writing or problem solving, as Victorian mill owners or experts in extreme weather conditions. The areas of study are available to parents on the school's website and through workshops and home-school projects. There are educational visits for all pupils to, for example, ruined castles and woodland walks that are then used to explore art, drama and music.
- Pupils are taught about right and wrong and learn the value of working co-operatively, for example in an enterprise week. They learn about the world beyond school and are made aware of different cultures and faiths through visitors who come to the school and through visits to galleries and museums. There are also opportunities in assembly and in lessons for quiet moments of contemplation.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is fully aware of the school's strengths and areas for development. They have a wide range of skills and have an increasingly sophisticated understanding of information about the school's performance. This means that as well as giving strong support to the headteacher they are also able to offer a constructive challenge. They visit the school regularly and some observe the quality of teaching at first hand. They set challenging targets for the headteacher and ensure that teachers' financial rewards are linked closely to their performance. They understand the expenditure and results of the pupil premium and manage all expenditure well. This includes the funding for sports and physical education that the school is intending to spend on training in gymnastics and dance. The governors ensure that safeguarding meets statutory requirements.

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	123373
Local authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	426974

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	152
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sandy Russell
Headteacher	Caroline Gardner
Date of previous school inspection	27 February 2012
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