

# Halstead Community Primary School

Otford Lane, Halsted, Kent, TN14 7EA

**Inspection dates** 11–12 December 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
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

- Pupils' achievement has been too varied since the previous inspection, particularly in writing.
- Attainment by the end of Year 6 in 2013 was below average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Not enough pupils attain the higher National Curriculum levels.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to write extended pieces.
- Opportunities for role play and developing early writing skills are limited in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- While teaching is improving, it has not been strong enough over time to promote good progress for all groups of pupils.
- Tasks are not always pitched correctly for the differing abilities of pupils, particularly for the most able.
- The leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are not sufficiently well developed.

### The school has the following strengths:

- The headteacher, staff and governors are taking positive action to raise achievement and improve teaching. As a result, pupils' progress is improving.
- There are examples of good teaching.
- The headteacher and staff have created a positive and safe environment for pupils to learn and develop.
- Pupils feel safe at school and very well cared for by all adults.
- Pupils have good attitudes to learning and behave well in lessons and around the school.
- Attendance is above average.
- The local authority provides a good range of advice and support to help the school improve.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning in nine lessons. Some of these were seen jointly with the headteacher.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, staff, a representative from the local authority, governors, parents and carers and pupils.
- The inspector took account of the 14 responses to the online survey (Parent View).
- Pupils were heard to read and discussions were held with them about their reading.
- Questionnaires from nine members of staff were analysed.
- The inspector examined school policies, information about pupils' attainment and progress, teachers' plans, pupils' work, safeguarding procedures and the school's development planning.

## Inspection team

Derek Watts, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

- This is a much smaller than average-sized primary school.
- Most of the pupils are White British. Other pupils come from a range of different ethnic heritages including Traveller, Black or White Caribbean and Indian.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion supported through school action plus or a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- An above average proportion of pupils are eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for pupils in local authority care, those known to be eligible for free school meals and other groups.
- The school meets the government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

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

- Make teaching good or better in all classes so that all groups of pupils make consistently good progress and attain better standards by Year 6, particularly in writing, by:
  - ensuring that teachers always set tasks at the right level of difficulty for individual pupils, particularly the most able
  - extending opportunities in the Early Years Foundation Stage for role play and for children to acquire and practise early writing skills
  - making sure that pupils have good opportunities to write extended pieces in English lessons and in other subjects.
- Improve leadership and management by:
  - strengthening the leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage so that provision and children's progress are consistently good
  - checking carefully the impact of new initiatives and staff training on pupils' progress.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because pupils' progress has not been consistently good since the previous inspection. Not enough pupils have made better progress than that expected nationally, particularly in writing.
- Children begin in Reception with knowledge, understanding and skills below those expected for their age. Teaching and learning activities are not sufficiently well developed to promote good progress for children in all areas of learning.
- Attainment by the end of Year 6 fluctuates because of the relatively small numbers in year groups. In 2013, attainment by the end of Year 6 was below average. The school's own assessments indicate that attainment in the current Year 6 is higher than that shown in last year's results.
- In 2013, few pupils attained levels higher than those nationally expected by the end of Year 6. While the school's data indicate that this situation is likely to improve, in lessons seen, the most-able pupils are not always provided with sufficiently demanding tasks and this hinders their progress.
- Pupils have not had sufficient opportunities to write extended pieces in English lessons or in other subjects. The headteacher and staff are taking positive steps to raise pupils' achievement, especially in writing. Teachers have received good training in the teaching of reading and writing. The action being taken is having a positive impact and assessments show that pupils are now making faster progress.
- Pupils often make good progress in speaking and listening because of the well-planned opportunities provided for them to discuss their learning in pairs and in small groups.
- The results of the phonics (letters and the sounds they make) reading check in 2013 were below average. Positive steps have been taken to strengthen the teaching of reading and to ensure that pupils who are below expected standards catch up.
- Pupils' achievement in writing is improving. Pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 produced detailed and interesting written recounts of their visit to London's Sealife Aquarium. They included interesting facts about electric eels, penguins and sharks. They used word processing and illustrations well to enhance their presentations.
- In 2013, Year 6 pupils supported by the pupil premium attained higher standards than the others in mathematics and reading. However, the eligible pupils attained less well than the others in writing and in grammar, punctuation and spelling. One-to-one tuition and writing projects are being used to further close the gaps in attainment.
- In mathematics, pupils are beginning to make good gains in skills in calculation. Practical problem-solving approaches are also playing a clear part in raising achievement. However, there are occasions when the most able are not sufficiently challenged.
- The progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is improving because activities and support are more carefully matched to their needs. Pupils receive effective guidance and support from teachers and teaching assistants.
- There is no significant difference between the achievement of different ethnic groups.
- Pupils are developing healthy lifestyles and physical fitness through physical education lessons and additional sporting activities. For example, opportunities for swimming have been extended using the sports grant.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Teaching has not been good enough over time to ensure that all groups of pupils make consistently good progress. Teaching is improving, but some weaknesses remain.
- In Reception, children's language skills and creativity are not promoted well enough.

Opportunities for children to acquire and practise early writing skills are also too limited.

- Teachers do not always plan tasks at the right level of difficulty for different groups. In particular, the work is not always demanding enough to fully challenge the most able.
- Although the teaching of writing is improving and having a positive impact on pupils' achievement, pupils are not taught to write at length across different subjects or given enough opportunities to practice these skills. However, improved practice in the teaching of writing was observed. For example, in a lesson for Years 4, 5 and 6 on persuasive writing, pupils were given good opportunities for drama and role play in order to persuade a partner. They effectively identified the features of successful persuasive writing from a text and were then moved on to planning their own persuasive writing.
- Teachers create a positive classroom atmosphere for learning. Relationships between adults and pupils are generally good. As a result, pupils are cooperative, keen and work well with other pupils, in pairs or in small groups.
- The teaching of reading is given good attention. Pupils have regular sessions to consolidate their use of phonics. More advanced reading skills, such as scanning, extracting information and making inferences, are effectively promoted as pupils move up the school. In the teaching of mathematics, pupils have good opportunities to improve their skills in mental calculation and in problem solving. Practical apparatus is used well to enhance learning in mathematics.
- In a successful mathematics lesson, pupils in Years 2 and 3 made good progress in solving division problems. Interesting tasks were well matched to pupils' levels of abilities so the pupils were challenged well. Pupils acquired new knowledge, deepened their understanding and correctly applied numerical skills. A range of practical apparatus supported understanding of division well. The teacher used demonstrations, explanations and questioning successfully to check and reinforce pupils' learning.
- The teaching of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is improving. Pupils receive good guidance and support from teaching assistants. Group teaching and one-to-one tuition are being used well to raise achievement of pupils supported by the pupil premium.
- Pupils have clear individual learning targets to guide their learning in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils know what they are aiming for. Teachers' marking and oral feedback help to move pupils' learning on to the next stage.

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

- The parents and carers who responded to the online survey, Parent View, strongly agreed that their children are happy, feel safe and are well looked after at school. They were also satisfied that the school promotes good behaviour. The inspection findings reflect the parents' and carers' positive views about behaviour and safety.
- Children in Reception enjoy their learning and establish positive relationships with adults and other children. They made good progress in their personal and social development. They share learning resources, work well with other children and are well behaved.
- Pupils in Years 1 to 6 show a keen interest in their learning and participate well in the activities provided. Just occasionally, pupils' attitudes to learning and their behaviour are less positive when teaching is not sufficiently challenging and engaging.
- Behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. The school's records show that serious incidents are very rare and that behaviour is typically good. There are clear systems of rewards and sanctions and effective steps are taken to deal with any unacceptable behaviour.
- All the pupils spoken to stated that they felt safe at school and very well looked after by adults. One pupil remarked, 'In this school we have fun and we know we are safe.'
- Pupils show a good understanding of bullying and the different forms it can take, including name calling, physical bullying and cyber bullying. They correctly stated that, 'Bullying is being horrible and unkind to another person and not stopping.' Pupils reported that bullying in school was very rare. They were confident that unpleasant behaviour, including bullying, is swiftly dealt with.
- Pupils are courteous, friendly and show consideration for others. They raise funds for a range of

charities. Through their studies, they have gained a good understanding of different cultures and faiths. For example, pupils showed a good knowledge of the festival of Diwali.

- Pupils are keen to come to school and attendance levels are above average.

## **The leadership and management** require improvement

- Leadership and management have not promoted consistently good achievement for pupils and good teaching since the previous inspection.
- The leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage has not yet established effective learning opportunities which promote good progress for children. The checking and improvement of this area have not received sufficient attention.
- The headteacher, governors and staff are taking positive steps to raise pupils' achievement and to improve the quality of teaching. The leadership of English, mathematics and special educational needs is developing well and having a positive impact on provision and on pupils' achievement.
- Teachers have attended useful courses on improving pupils' writing and on how to make teaching and learning successful. The quality of teaching is checked by the headteacher and the local authority. Teachers and staff are working well as a team and are keen to move the school's performance to good. Leaders are beginning to measure the impact of new initiatives and staff training on pupils' achievement, but leaders' action is not yet having full impact on improving all areas of the school.
- There are appropriate procedures for appraising the performance of teachers. Training and improvement targets are well linked to pupils' progress and school priorities.
- The curriculum provides an appropriate range of subjects and topics. Pupils enjoy the additional activities, such as clubs and educational visits. Positive action is being taken to strengthen learning opportunities in writing. The sports grant has been effectively allocated to extend pupils' sporting opportunities.
- The pupil premium funding is being properly used to provide eligible pupils with additional support. Improved provision for the pupils supported by the pupil premium is having a positive impact on their progress.
- The headteacher and staff have created a positive and welcoming place for pupils to learn and develop. Equality of opportunity is promoted well. There are no signs of discrimination and all pupils are valued and have full access to the activities on offer.
- The local authority has an accurate and very clear overview of the school's performance. A senior adviser attends regular meetings with the school's leaders to check pupils' progress. Other advisers provide useful support in checking and improving teaching and learning. Staff and governors take advantage of the range of courses and development opportunities provided by the local authority, including leaders below senior level.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Members of the governing body have an accurate and realistic view of the school's performance, especially pupils' attainment and progress. Governors are supportive and their clear overview of the school's strengths and weaknesses enables them to constructively challenge the leadership and hold the school to account. They are fully aware that the school currently requires improvement. Governors know what the quality of teaching is and receive regular, accurate information about the quality of teaching from the headteacher. Reports from the local authority provide useful information on how the school is progressing and governors can interpret what data on pupils' achievement show. Governors understand the requirements relating to the management of staff performance and the importance of promotion and salary increases being linked to pupils' progress. They ensure that pupil premium funding is properly spent and check the impact of spending on pupils' progress. Governors have attended a range of useful courses to enhance their effectiveness. All safeguarding requirements 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	118274
<b>Local authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	426459

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	66
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Steve Grice
<b>Headteacher</b>	Leslie Hawkins
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	28 October 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	01959 532224
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