

Hadlow Primary School

Hadlow, Tonbridge, Kent, TN11 0EH

Inspection dates 11–12 December 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	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		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Despite steady improvement since the last inspection there are still too few pupils making consistently good progress in English across the school.
- Pupils who have difficulty in learning to read at Key Stage 1 are not given sufficient support to quicken their progress. Fluent readers are provided with too few opportunities to read different types of texts to extend their skills.
- Teachers are not always accurate in judging the level of attainment of pupils' work so some lessons are not planned appropriately for the wide range of pupils' different abilities.
- Marking is not consistent enough in helping pupils to understand what they need to do to improve their work.
- The expectations for the presentation of pupils' work are not high enough and their handwriting is often untidy.
- Middle leaders, especially those new to role, are still developing their knowledge and skills in assessing the quality of teaching and so are unable to make a significant contribution to driving improvement.

The school has the following strengths:

- Reception age children make good progress because they are well taught and adults plan experiences carefully that really make the children think.
- Leaders, managers and governors have the confidence of the staff and have set the school on an improving course.
- All pupils, particularly those whose circumstances make them vulnerable, are well looked after and they repay this by behaving very well and caring for each other.
- The school provides a wide range of opportunities for pupils to be involved in sport and participation is high.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 15 lessons, of which seven were joint observations with the headteacher. In addition, inspectors made a number of other short visits to lessons. They also looked at pupils' books and observed other aspects of the school's work.
- Meetings were held with five governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body, and teachers. Pupils took inspectors on a tour of the school. The inspectors also listened to and spoke to pupils about their reading. A meeting was held with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 57 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), spoke to parents and carers at the school gate and considered four letters from parents and carers. Inspectors reviewed 16 questionnaire responses from staff.
- A number of documents were looked at, including the school's own information relating to pupils' achievement, the school's self-evaluation summary and school development plan, planning documentation, records relating to behaviour and attendance and checks on teaching, policy documents and documents relating to safeguarding. The inspectors also looked at the school's website.

Inspection team

Martin Marsh, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Selina Sharpe

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- A third of pupils are known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional government funding which supports pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, looked after children and children of service families). In this school all the eligible pupils are those entitled to free school meals and the proportion is above average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- Only a small proportion of pupils belong to ethnic groups other than White British and nearly all speak English as their first language.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so a greater proportion is at least good by:
 - ensuring all teachers have an accurate understanding of different pupils' attainment and plan work that is at exactly the right level of challenge to move their learning forward
 - ensuring all lessons get off to a brisk start and pupils are engaged at the outset
 - making sure that there is greater consistency in marking so that pupils know precisely what they need to do to improve their work
 - raising teachers' expectations of pupils in terms of handwriting and presentation.
- Increase rates of progress in English, and particularly reading, by:
 - making sure that all pupils, especially those at Key Stage 2 who are not fluent readers, have carefully structured support so they can learn their letters and the sounds they make (phonics) to assist their reading
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to develop their comprehension skills through reading a wider range of different texts
 - targeting pupil premium funding more sharply to ensure that eligible pupils at Key Stage 1 make rapid progress in learning to read.
- Develop the role of middle leaders so that they have a greater impact on improving the quality of teaching.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Pupils do not make good enough progress because teaching is not consistently good and this impedes their overall achievement.
- Children start in Reception with lower than expected levels of ability for their age, especially in literacy and communication skills. By the time pupils leave in Year 6 their attainment in English and mathematics is average overall, but pupils achieve higher standards in mathematics than in English. Progress in reading and writing is not as rapid as in mathematics.
- A below average proportion met the standard expected in the most recent phonics screening test in Year 1 and the retake in Year 2. This is because programmes to help pupils learn their letters and the sounds they make (phonics) have, in the past, not been taught effectively.
- Inspection evidence indicates that current pupils are making better progress in reading because teaching has improved and now takes account of pupils' needs and different abilities. However, some Key Stage 2 pupils who have difficulty in building confident reading skills are not given enough time to practise their phonics skills and this hampers their progress.
- Pupils who are fluent readers enjoy reading but are not always given enough opportunities to read a range of different texts to deepen their understanding and comprehension.
- Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals lagged behind their counterparts by 11 months in mathematics in the 2013 national tests, six months in reading and 18 months in writing. This was entirely due to ineffective teaching prior to the last inspection. In the last two years the school has used its funding to provide additional help in the classroom and small-group and one-to-one additional support. Inspection evidence from observations and work sampling indicates that the gap in attainment is closing in all year groups.
- The progress of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs and the small number of pupils for whom English is an additional language make similar progress to other pupils. Effective support and tailor-made programmes ensure they learn successfully. The school's actions have a positive impact on reducing inequalities and improving these pupils' life chances.
- Progress in mathematics is good and pupils are given plenty of opportunities to develop and practise their skills. Pupils who are more able are routinely given challenging work which enables them to make good and often outstanding progress, especially throughout Key Stage 2.
- Children make a good start in Reception because the provision both indoors and outside stimulates their interest and adults routinely challenge children with questions to deepen their thinking or clarify their understanding. In a mathematics lesson, adults were helping children to make good progress in forming repeating patterns using a range of different equipment.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Not enough teaching is consistently good or better, especially in English. Leaders are improving reading, but some Key Stage 2 pupils are not being enabled to practise phonics and build confident reading skills, whilst others read too narrow a range of text and this hampers their higher-level understanding.
- Teaching sometimes fails to capture pupils' interest and imagination because it is not well enough planned to meet the needs of every group of pupils in the class and speed up their progress. At times the work is either too easy or too difficult for pupils so that they are at risk of either becoming bored or frustrated.
- Although pupils' work is marked regularly and there are some instances where it helps pupils to understand how to improve their work, this is not consistent across the school. Pupils are not wholly confident about their targets, especially those to improve their reading and writing.
- Adult support is particularly strong when pupils are working in groups. Teaching assistants work effectively with individuals and groups, helping them to make good progress.

- Often handwriting and general presentation of work are untidy because teachers' expectations are too low and not enough attention is given to teaching handwriting skills.
- All lessons are characterised by excellent relationships between adults and children. Pupils value the 'casualty' opportunities where they can get special help from the teacher if they are struggling or the teacher has identified that they need a bit of extra help.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and provide interesting activities for the pupils to do. In a Year 2 science lesson, pupils were totally absorbed with fitting together electric circuits and, as a result, developed an excellent understanding of the different conductors of electricity and electrical resistance.
- In mathematics, teachers often use questioning skilfully to elicit the level of pupils' knowledge and deepen their thinking skills. In a Year 3 mathematics lesson, pupils who the teacher had assessed as having been successful at finding three quarters of a quantity were independently using the same resources at the start of the next lesson to find five eighths of a quantity. This approach extended their knowledge and challenged their thinking and all made rapid progress.
- Highly effective teaching enables children in Reception to learn and develop successfully in all the areas they experience.
- Well-trained teaching assistants run a wide range of additional small-group and one-to-one lessons outside of the classroom to help pupils in danger of falling behind to catch up.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils told inspectors they are happy, feel safe and are well looked after, and this was the view of the vast majority of parents and carers spoken to at the school gate or who responded to Parent View.
- Around the school, and in lessons, pupils are well behaved and considerate towards each other. They are well mannered and enjoy talking to visitors about their school and their work. Adults have high expectations of how pupils should behave and they generally respond to these expectations very well. Relationships are tolerant and harmonious and pupils are proud to belong to their school community.
- There are some pupils who find managing their own behaviour difficult and the other pupils understand this and say that it does not interfere with their own learning. This is because the school manages behaviour very well. The school works well with the pupils and families of those whose circumstances make them vulnerable, showing a high level of care to enable pupils to be happy at school and get the most out of the opportunities it provides.
- A few parents and carers expressed concerns as to how bullying was dealt with in school. The inspectors examined the school's records relating to behaviour and found that incidents are carefully tracked and appropriate action is taken.
- Pupils have a good understanding of what constitutes bullying including cyber bullying. They say that incidents are rare, but when they do occur are dealt with properly. Pupils also have a good understanding of how to stay safe when using the internet.
- The school successfully promotes equalities and, as a result, pupils willingly take on the roles of 'buddies', helping younger pupils at break times, or as representatives of their class on the school council. Pupils link with pen pals in Tanzania and Jamaica and are knowledgeable about different religions, faiths and cultures other than their own.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are good but occasionally concentration lapses when teaching is less strong and behaviour becomes restless.
- Attendance is above average and pupils arrive at school on time.

The leadership and management require improvement

- Since the last inspection, the headteacher and other leaders have steered the school through a difficult time and successfully arrested the decline in standards at the time. Pupils' progress is

improving, due to leaders' effective actions to raise the standard of teaching, but not all pupils are yet maximising their achievement and a small minority of parents and carers still have concerns about this. New staff have made a positive start and share in the headteacher's ambition to move quickly to improve the school's effectiveness.

- Robust systems to check how well the school is doing have been set up so that senior leaders now have an accurate view of the school and know what needs to improve. School improvement planning is robust and actions are well focused on the right priorities, with clear targets to enable leaders and governors to regularly check on progress.
- Leaders' close checks on stemming underachievement and support to help pupils catch up are working well. However, not all teachers are yet using accurate assessment information to ensure that all pupils are set the right level of work. Performance management targets are in place to address this.
- Staff with subject or aspect responsibilities, many of whom are new to role, are being supported to develop their experience and skills when evaluating teaching and its impact on learning so they can make a more significant contribution to raising standards.
- The school's curriculum, based on a core set of values that are understood by everyone, makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education, resulting in a harmonious school community and pupils' good behaviour. The curriculum is supplemented by a wide range of visits and visitors to school.
- The school has been awarded the government-led School Games Golden Kitemark and offers a range of sports opportunities that pupils eagerly participate in because they understand the importance of living a healthy lifestyle. The extra government funding is being used to enhance the range of sports offered and to provide coaching for teachers.
- The local authority provides appropriate support and challenge which are valued highly by the school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governors know the school well and acknowledge that in the past this was not the case as they did not really understand the school's data. They know the improvements that have been made since the last inspection and what still needs to be done to improve teaching and further raise standards. The Chair of the Governing Body has a weekly meeting with the headteacher where progress towards school improvement priorities is discussed. As a result of sustained improvement since the last inspection, a review of governors' performance is not required. The governing body has a wide range of skills, including those of several governors from school backgrounds, and takes training seriously, availing itself of the local authority's governor support service and working well in collaboration with other schools. Finances are managed effectively and governors are aware of the impact of the pupil premium funding on the progress of eligible pupils. They are alert to Key Stage 1 pupils requiring more support with learning to read. They understand the close link between teachers' pay and performance. The governors give appropriate support to the school in meeting safeguarding responsibilities, including those in relation to recruitment, and the school's systems for safeguarding meet 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	118273
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	426458

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	180
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Gill Brown
Headteacher	Deborah Hockey
Date of previous school inspection	19–20 October 2011
Telephone number	01732 850349
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