

# Handcross Primary School

London Road, Handcross, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH17 6HB

**Inspection dates** 15–16 January 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	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.

- Pupils make good progress because teaching across the school is typically good and some is outstanding.
- By the time they leave the school, pupils consistently attain levels in reading and writing which are above those expected for their age.
- Pupils make good progress during lessons because activities are usually interesting and creative.
- The work in pupils' writing and topic books shows that pupils are making good progress in their learning.
- The support for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is good and planned group work ensures they achieve well.
- Behaviour is good and pupils have high expectations of their own behaviour. This contributes to the good progress they make. The pupils feel safe and the school provides very good support and care for them.
- The school is warm and welcoming and staff are proud to be part of it. They recognise their accountability and make the most of the good opportunities for training that are available.
- Pupils learn a very good range of subjects that are linked well through the topics they study. Their learning in humanities is impressive.
- Leadership is good because senior leaders, including governors, know how well the school is doing and what it needs to do to improve further.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- A small proportion of girls do not attain levels as high as boys in mathematics by the end of Key Stage 2.
- Not enough of the quality of teaching over time is outstanding.
- Not all teaching, particularly in mathematics, challenges the most able pupils to further enhance their skills. Inspectors agree with some of these pupils who say they find the work too easy.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching in all classes. They visited 17 full or part lessons and observed pupils' behaviour in the playground. Six observations were made jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspection team held meetings with senior leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body and three other members, pupils and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors observed many aspects of the school's work, including plans for its future development, the school's arrangements for keeping pupils safe, pupils' attendance records, minutes from governing body minutes, records of how the quality of teaching is checked and records of how pupils' learning is checked and tracked.
- The views of parents were taken into account through taking note of the 80 responses to the online Parent View survey and discussions with parents on the playground.
- Staff views were taken into consideration by looking at questionnaires completed by 21 staff members and through discussions with several members of staff.

## Inspection team

Gianni Bianchi, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Christine Bennett

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is a smaller than average-sized primary school, but numbers are increasing. There are six classes; one in each of Reception, Year 1, Year 2 and Year 3, and a mixed Years 4/5 and Years 5/6 class.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is above average, as is the proportion who are supported at school action plus or have a statement of special educational needs. Some of these pupils have specific learning difficulties, whilst others have speech, language and communication needs.
- Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. A very small proportion of pupils are represented from minority ethnic backgrounds, as are pupils whose first language is not English.
- Only a small number of pupils are supported by the pupil premium funding which provides additional funding for children in the care of the local authority, children of parents serving in the armed services and pupils eligible for free school meals.
- The school is a member of a local partnership with several other local primary schools.
- 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?

- Raise achievement in mathematics, particularly for girls, and increase the proportion of outstanding teaching by:
  - making sure the most able are given hard enough work and by giving them opportunities to think for themselves to deepen their understanding
  - assessing information on how well girls are progressing in mathematics to plan specific support so that they reach at least similar levels to boys.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Children enter the Reception class with skills and knowledge below those typical for their age. Effective teaching ensures they make good progress and enter Year 1 with skills closer to those expected for their age.
- As a result of good teaching, the progress that pupils make in every year group in reading, writing and mathematics is good in relation to their low starting points.
- Pupils in Years 1 to 6 achieve well. End of Year 6 tests show that pupils consistently attain levels above those expected for their age in reading and writing, but not in mathematics where girls lag behind boys. This is why achievement is not outstanding.
- Daily phonics (the sounds that letters make) is taught well and pupils reach the standards expected of them in the Year 1 phonics screening check. In good phonics lessons both the teachers and teaching assistants model correct letter sounds, often using puppets, and, as a result, progress is good.
- Reading is given high priority and is a strength of the school. From the youngest to the oldest, pupils say how much they enjoy reading. An inspector met with some pupils who found reading difficult and they happily read aloud and talked with pleasure about books they were currently reading.
- The work of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is carefully monitored. Those who have specific learning difficulties and those with speech, language and communication needs make good progress in line with challenging expectations. Teaching assistants provide a very good balance of guidance and support for these pupils and they gain considerable confidence in their ability as they move through the school.
- In this school, the pupil premium funding is used well to support individual pupils by providing extra one-to-one teacher support for pupils who need it and for small group work. Numbers are too small to enable comparisons with other groups.
- The typically good achievement of pupils in English and mathematics means that pupils are well prepared for secondary education. This includes the small number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and pupils whose first language is not English.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching across the school is consistently good and there are some examples of outstanding practice. Teachers consistently communicate high expectations of learning and pupils usually understand what they need to do to make progress.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage offers children good opportunities to experiment and make discoveries for themselves. The effective mix of child-led and adult-led activities and the rich and vibrant environment lead to good progress and learning.
- Teachers make learning fun and include opportunities for pupils to further explore their ideas. In an outstanding Year 2 writing lesson, children were learning to edit and improve their sentences. The most able pupils were challenged to start their sentences in a variety of ways using words other than 'and'. This deepened their understanding and led to high standards of learning and rapid progress. One child was proud to tell the inspector, 'I've done more than three,' which was their target.
- Questioning in the main is effectively used to develop pupils' thinking and check understanding. In an outstanding mathematics lesson in upper Key Stage 2, the teacher's skilful open-ended questions allowed pupils to deepen their understanding of how to use averages to calculate how much recycling was being generated in their locality. As a result, the pupils made accelerated progress.
- Teaching is not outstanding because too often teaching in mathematics does not challenge the

most able pupils and extend their understanding of the skills being taught. In a lesson where pupils were learning how to solve word problems, they all carried out the same task and some able pupils told the inspector that the work was too easy. Therefore, their rate of progress slows as they wait for others to catch up. Work in mathematics books shows it is often planned at the same level of difficulty for all pupils.

- Work in pupils' writing and topic books is well presented and shows progression and tasks that are suitably challenging.
- Topic work is used very effectively to link different subjects in ways that result in thoughtful absorbing lessons. In an outstanding lesson on saving planet Earth, pupils were able to use their writing, information and communication technology and geography skills as they learned how to calculate their own carbon footprint. There was a sense of wonder as pupils learnt new skills and the team inspector reported, 'I wanted to join in.'

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

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils have high expectations of their own behaviour and this contributes to the good progress they make.
- The school has a warm and welcoming atmosphere. Pupils' behaviour in class and around school is very good and the pupils are courteous and considerate to each other.
- Relationships between pupils and adults and amongst pupils themselves are very good. Pupils listen to each other and to staff very well.
- The school operates a highly effective behaviour management system which pupils and staff are fully aware of. However, the behaviour of pupils is not outstanding because in some lessons where pupils are not challenged to deepen their understanding they begin to chat, become less interested and rates of progress slow.
- The school's work to promote the safety of pupils at the school is outstanding because pupils know how to keep themselves safe and feel very safe at school. Pupils feel confident in lessons to offer ideas and share their learning with each other in an atmosphere free from discrimination and without fear of making a mistake.
- The pupils understand the different forms of bullying including how to stay safe on the internet. Pupils told inspectors that bullying is rare and if it occurs they feel safe that their teachers will help them resolve it.
- An overwhelming majority of parents who responded to the Parent View questionnaire agreed that behaviour and safety in the school are well managed and that their children are safe, happy and very well looked after.
- Attendance is high and pupils enjoy coming to school

### **The leadership and management** are good

- The headteacher, who has developed a strong culture of learning, has very high ambitions for the school. She ensures her committed staff receive up-to-date training and, together with the governing body, has made sure that teaching and standards have remained good since the last inspection. She is determined to make the school outstanding once again.
- School leaders know what the school does well and what it needs to do to improve further and the school's current focus on mathematics is the correct one. Since September 2013, middle leaders have been pivotal in introducing 'Maths Makes Sense' from the Reception class to Year 4, and they support colleagues in delivering this new approach to the teaching of mathematics. Even though initial signs are positive, it has not yet had time to fully impact on standards.
- Teachers understand their accountability and regular checks on pupils' progress enable them to be well prepared for termly pupil progress meetings, where they discuss with senior leaders the progress of pupils in their class. Equality is at the heart of the school's work and leaders know

that more needs to be done to use the information on how well girls are progressing in mathematics to plan specific support so that they reach at least similar levels to boys.

- The school has a well organised curriculum that promotes pupils' appreciation of the traditions and cultures of other countries and religions. It is enriched with a multicultural week, Forest School, trips that make learning meaningful and out-of-school clubs and activities that widen pupils' experiences.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well through the exciting and vibrant curriculum, structured assemblies and a good range of curriculum opportunities in religious education, history and geography. Pupils have opportunities to take on responsibilities; for example, Year 5 pupils are very proud to be sports leaders.
- The sports funding is used primarily to employ a sports coach who leads and promotes active engagement in sports. Pupils' participation in physical activity has increased and leaders are beginning to see an improvement in the self-esteem of some pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable.
- The school ensures that all statutory safeguarding requirements are met.
- The local authority provides light touch support for the school. The school is part of a support network with other local schools and often shares resources. An example is that headteachers carry out joint observations within each other's schools.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors are active in the life of the school and offer effective challenge. Their direct impact on the school's drive for improvement is good. They understand development priorities and are well informed of the school's performance and how it compares to other schools. They have an accurate overview of the quality of teaching and set the headteacher challenging performance management targets that focus directly on school improvement. Governors ensure the efficient management of financial resources, including the use of pupil premium funding, and understand the links between salary progression and teachers' performance.

## 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>	125932
<b>Local authority</b>	West Sussex
<b>Inspection number</b>	440362

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>	174
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Suzanne Fowler
<b>Headteacher</b>	Gillian Pedersen
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	18–19 May 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	01444 400291
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