

Littlehaven Infant School

Hawkesbourne Road, Horsham, West Sussex, RH12 4EH

Inspection dates 4–5 February 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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.

- Pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics has remained above average since the last inspection and has been rising steadily over time.
- All groups of pupils make good progress because teaching is consistently good, with a small proportion that is outstanding. Writing is taught especially well.
- The provision for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is particularly good.
- Reception children make good progress and a confident start to school life, helped by clear routines and stimulating activities.
- The school's core values, such as perseverance and respect, are shared with pupils daily. They underpin the excellent relationships in the school and support pupils' learning and development very well.
- Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and attend regularly. They feel safe and well cared for and get on very well together. They are polite and well behaved at all times. Parents, other adults and pupils all fully support this view.
- The experienced headteacher's calm and determined leadership has helped to maintain above average standards despite considerable staff turbulence and fluctuating numbers of pupils. She has welded together a strong, ambitious team committed to a vision of outstanding achievement for all pupils.
- Highly skilled governors are supporting the leadership's vision exceptionally well. They have excellent knowledge of the school's work and offer it an appropriate level of challenge.
- Excellent external partnerships and strong provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development all play their part in the school's success.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils sometimes make a slow start to their tasks because teachers do not make it clear enough what they should be learning.
- Outstanding teaching in the school is not used enough as examples to support other teachers' professional development.
- Although pupils have a good knowledge of phonics (letters and the sounds they make), they do not use and extend these skills often enough in their reading and writing.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector visited nine lessons, observing six teachers across the school along with a number of teaching assistants working with small groups of pupils. The inspector also talked to pupils about their work and heard individual pupils read from Year 2 as well as others in lessons.
- A wide range of documents was scrutinised, including pupils' work, systems for checking progress, records relating to behaviour and attendance, safeguarding procedures, the school's self-evaluation and planning for improvement, records of monitoring the quality of teaching and the minutes of the governing body meetings.
- Meetings were held with members of the governing body, school staff and groups of pupils. Individual pupils were spoken to in lessons and around the school. A meeting took place with an adviser from the local authority.
- Questionnaires from 13 members of staff were analysed. The inspector took account of the views expressed in 59 online responses to Parent View and spoke to a number of parents during informal meetings before school.

Inspection team

Anna Sketchley

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Littlehaven is smaller than the average-sized infant school. Most pupils attend from the local area.
- All pupils of Reception age and those in Year 1 are taught in mixed-age classes. Pupils in Year 2 are taught in single-age classes.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is average, as is the proportion of pupils at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in local authority care, the children of service families and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, is average.
- The number of pupils from ethnic minority groups is below average and there are currently no pupils in the early stages of learning English.
- A privately-run pre-school is situated in the infant school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching from good to outstanding by:
 - showing pupils more examples of what they should be learning before they attempt their work
 - sharing more widely the outstanding teaching practice that exists in the school.
- Raise attainment further by giving pupils more opportunities to practise their knowledge of letters and sounds when they are reading and writing.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- In 2013, children's levels of knowledge and skill on entry were typical for their age, but these vary from year to year. Levels are usually below those expected in some aspects of literacy and language and calculation.
- Teachers organise and plan effectively for the mixed-age Reception and Year 1 classes so Reception children make good progress across all seven areas of learning. By the end of the Reception year, they are at least in line with, and sometimes exceed, nationally expected levels.
- Reception children benefit considerably from the example set by Year 1 pupils. Routines are particularly well established and relationships between children and adults are excellent, so even the youngest children are very confident in choosing their own activities.
- The school ensures that pupils practise their reading daily in group reading times. Pupils say they enjoy reading and some visit various local libraries at weekends. They use their knowledge of phonics to help them read unfamiliar words and are competent at breaking the words up, but they have more difficulty in blending the sounds together. Although pupils make good progress in phonics, their results in the Year 1 national screening check in 2013 were below average.
- The results of national tests at the end of Key Stage 1 show that pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics has remained above average and has also been rising steadily since the last inspection. Following a slight dip in the achievement of the most-able pupils in 2013, lessons observed during the inspection and the scrutiny of pupils' work showed that standards in the current Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics continue to be above average. The most-able pupils make the same good progress as all other pupils.
- Pupils whose circumstances might make them vulnerable, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, are extremely well supported in the classroom by teachers and by highly skilled teaching assistants. They are also well supported in one-to-one sessions. In a particularly successful special programme, a pupil was observed making rapid progress in mathematics because of the teacher's skilful technique, good employment of resources and carefully targeted questioning. Sometimes pupils' very complex needs prevent these pupils from reaching the same standard as those in the same group nationally, but they make good, and sometimes very good, progress from their own starting points.
- The gap in attainment between those who receive pupil premium funding and all other pupils has reduced significantly over time. School information shows that pupils currently receiving funding are on track to reach standards in reading and mathematics that are similar to all other Year 2 pupils in 2014. Standards in writing are approximately a term behind other pupils in the school, but are higher than those for this group nationally.

The quality of teaching is good

- Lessons begin promptly and teachers' introductions, often using the interactive whiteboard, capture pupils' interest immediately.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour. They use the school's core values to remind pupils to persevere and 'keep trying'.
- Teachers make sure that pupils are very clear about what they are to learn and provide them with a list of criteria to help them assess how well they are doing as they work at their tasks.
- Activities chosen by the teachers are exciting and stimulating and engage children immediately. Children's imagination was completely captured as they 'fell asleep' to music and slept and snored like polar bears while being showered with coloured scarves in readiness for their writing task based on the story of the *Rainbow Bear*.
- Pupils have their individual targets in front of them as they work. Targets include, for example, remembering to leave finger spaces between words. As a result, in one lesson where pupils were making information booklets, pupils' writing was neatly presented and easy to read. The marking

of pupils' work also draws their attention to their targets, so that pupils are constantly reminded about how they can improve.

- During the inspection, the teaching of phonics was observed and judged as being taught well. Writing is taught exceptionally well. Sometimes when pupils are reading and writing in other subjects, however, there are missed opportunities for them to practise their phonics, so they make insufficient use of the skills they have learned in phonics lessons.
- Teachers know pupils' abilities well, enabling them to target pupils with questions that have just the right amount of challenge. This enables them to assess correctly the understanding of pupils as the lesson progresses, helping them to make good progress.
- Teaching assistants are highly skilled and used very well to support the learning of different groups of pupils.
- There is a small proportion of outstanding teaching, but this is not yet used by the school to help other teachers develop their skills. For example, in some lessons where pupils were being introduced to something new, their progress slowed because they were not shown sufficient examples of what they should have been learning.
- Pupils are given many brief opportunities within lessons to discuss their work and share their ideas. This makes a substantial contribution to the good pace of learning and helps pupils to develop their social and thinking skills.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. There have been no exclusions since the last inspection and incidents of challenging behaviour are rare. Records show that when incidents have occurred they have been very well managed and pupils' behaviour has improved. Pupils, other adults and an exceptionally high percentage of parents wholly support this view.
- Pupils and adults exhibit strong mutual respect. Pupils have a very clear understanding of what constitutes good behaviour because every week there is a focus on one of the school's core values. During the inspection, behaviour observed in the playground, and notably in assembly, was impeccable.
- Pupils say lessons are 'exciting' and that school is 'just perfect.' They are eager to help and enjoy being playground buddies and members of the school and eco-councils, fulfilling another of the school's core values: learning about responsibility.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils say they feel very safe in school and this view was fully supported by parents both in Parent View and in informal discussions with parents during the inspection.
- Pupils are taught how to keep safe, both in school and when they are out and about. Rules for keeping safe on the internet, anti-bullying strategies and programmes such as 'Stranger Danger' ensure that they know how to avoid unsafe situations and what to do and who to go to if they are in trouble. Pupils were involved in joint risk assessments when taking part in activities such as designing shelters, carrying sticks and lighting fires during their 'Sheriff of Nottingham' outdoor day.
- Behaviour and safety are not outstanding because, occasionally, one or two pupils drift away from their tasks in lessons. This is very quickly and positively managed and is not allowed to disrupt the learning of others.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has used her considerable experience and calm determination very well to guide the school through a period of significant staff turbulence since the last inspection. Staffing is now more stable and a strong team is emerging, wholly committed to making the school outstanding. The headteacher is developing senior and middle leaders well and they are playing a leading role in continuing to raise achievement, especially in the provision for special

educational needs and in reading, writing and mathematics. They are fully supported by knowledgeable governors offering just the right balance of challenge and support.

- Good achievement has been maintained and built upon and there has been a marked improvement in some areas of the school's work. As a result of a more rigorous approach to gathering and assessing information about pupils' progress, and sharing this in detail with teachers, the next stages of pupils' learning are planned more accurately and pupils are making quicker progress. However, there are still some weaknesses in teaching.
- Alongside this improvement is the very effective, regular checking of teachers' performance against the national Teachers' Standards. This is providing information about teachers' professional needs and enabling the school to provide the right training, for example in new methods of teaching number and writing. This training has helped improve pupils' attainment this year, especially in Year 2. All of these successful initiatives demonstrate that the school has the capacity to improve further.
- The curriculum has recently been reviewed to take account of the new National Curriculum. However, the school remains committed to theme-based teaching that offers pupils a good range of exciting opportunities and emphasises the skills pupils need across different subjects. Literacy and numeracy skills are especially well represented in this approach.
- Curriculum themes also contain very well planned provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. One outcome from last term's theme 'Happily Ever After' was a group of pupils trained to be peer mediators at playtimes to help pupils resolve minor differences.
- The curriculum is enriched by visits, visitors and after-school clubs. Pupils spoke enthusiastically of visits to Arundel Castle and to a lifeboat station. New primary school sports funding is being used to employ a secondary school sports teacher for one day a week for the year. This is already improving other teachers' skills and promoting more enjoyment in physical activities for pupils. There is also a good take up for the after-school sports club.
- Strong partnerships have been developed with parents, the local community, other local schools and external agencies. These all support the learning and development of pupils exceptionally well. The local authority offers the school very light touch monitoring.
- Equal opportunities for different groups of pupils are promoted well and the school does not tolerate any form of discrimination. The governing body and school staff ensure that safeguarding procedures are followed rigorously.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have excellent procedures to check the work of the school closely through a system of working parties and school visits. They are very supportive and also very knowledgeable about the school's performance, including the quality of teaching. This knowledge enables them to ask searching questions and challenge decisions and outcomes. Governors are particularly well informed about the spending and impact of funding for the pupil premium and sports and can discuss these initiatives in detail. They receive comprehensive information about teachers' performance, pay and progression and have robust arrangements in place for setting objectives and reviewing the performance of the headteacher. They carry out all their statutory duties very diligently.

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	125837
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	431451

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	132
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Helen Oakley
Headteacher	Sylvia White
Date of previous school inspection	13 May 2009
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Fax number	01403 260926
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