

Hart Primary School

Magdalene Drive, Hart Village, Hartlepool, TS27 3AP

Inspection dates 5–6 February 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement.

- Over time, pupils' achievement and progress have varied across year groups, subjects and between groups.
- Too few pupils achieve standards that are above the expectations for their age in writing. This is because pupils are given too few chances to practise their writing in other subjects. Pupils' weaker handwriting, presentation and spelling skills also slow their progress.
- Teachers do not always have sufficiently high enough expectations of what pupils, particularly the most able, can achieve and how quickly they can learn.
- Marking is inconsistent. Pupils do not always know what they do well, what they need to do to improve or have time to respond to teachers' comments.
- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Some pupils are slow to settle in lessons. This is because behaviour is not managed consistently well across the school.
- The new system for checking the progress pupils make does not yet give school leaders a clear picture of pupils' performance across the school.
- Not all middle leaders are skilled enough in analysing the quality of teaching to make certain that pupils are making good progress.

The school has the following strengths

- The acting headteacher, supported by the strong governing body, has introduced a range of initiatives which have resulted in noticeable improvements in pupils' achievement. As a result, the school's overall performance is improving steadily.
- Pupils read widely and eagerly. The school promotes the enjoyment of reading well.
- Pupils feel the school is a safe and happy place to which they enjoy coming to learn. This is reflected in their above average attendance.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed eight lessons or parts of lessons. One observation was conducted jointly with the acting headteacher. The inspector also observed pupils being taught in small groups and listened to pupils from different year groups reading.
- Meetings were held with pupils, the acting headteacher and assistant headteacher, middle leaders, members of the governing body and two representatives of the local authority.
- The inspector observed the overall work of the school and looked at a number of documents, including the school's data about pupils' current progress. In addition, the inspector looked at documents relating to safeguarding, governance, behaviour and attendance.
- The inspector took account of the 21 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), held discussions with parents at the start of the school day and received a letter from one parent.
- The inspector looked at a range of other evidence, including displays, the school's website and evidence representing the school's wider achievements beyond the classroom.

Inspection team

Margaret Armstrong, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is smaller than the average-sized primary school. It has been federated with St Peter's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School since September 2010. The two schools share the same executive headteacher and governing body. At the time of the inspection, an acting headteacher was leading the two schools during the executive headteacher's maternity leave.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium is well below average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is well below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- Pupils are taught in mixed-aged classes because of the small size of the school.
- Since the last inspection, there have been several changes to the leadership of the school. Two newly qualified teachers have also recently joined the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better, to further raise standards and the rate of pupils' progress, especially for the most able, by:
 - ensuring pupils are fully challenged with demanding tasks which enable more of them to make even better than expected progress
 - raising teachers' expectations of how much work pupils can produce and the rate at which pupils can learn
 - improving marking by pointing out what pupils do well and what they need to do to improve and giving them time to respond to their teachers' comments.
- Raise standards in writing by:
 - improving pupils' handwriting and presentation skills so that pupils are more fluent in their writing and reach a higher standard
 - ensuring that pupils are able to use their understanding of the sounds that letters represent (phonics) to improve their spelling of words and make them more confident when spelling new words
 - making sure pupils have plenty of opportunities to write at length across a range of subjects.
- Further improve the behaviour of those few pupils who find it difficult to concentrate on their work by consistently applying the school's strategies for managing behaviour.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that the new tracking system to check on the progress pupils are making is firmly established by all staff so they can be held accountable for the performance of pupils in their class

- ensuring that middle leaders fully develop their skills in order to check learning and progress in their areas of responsibility.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because, over time, although pupils have made at least expected progress, too few have made more than expected progress given their starting points.
- From their individual starting points, pupils do not make consistently good progress in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. This is because the overall quality of teaching requires improvement and learning opportunities are not matched well enough to pupils' needs.
- By the end of Year 6, pupils' overall attainment is typically broadly average, which represents expected progress from their starting points for these groups of pupils. Pupils' performance in writing remains less strong than in reading and mathematics. This is because there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to write at length across a range of subjects. In addition, pupils' handwriting, presentation and spelling skills are not sufficiently well developed.
- The most able pupils make slower progress than others. This is because the work set is too easy; as a result, they quickly lose interest and their productivity wanes as they wait for others to catch up. Pupils themselves report that their work is sometimes 'a little too easy' and say they would welcome opportunities to work on more demanding tasks which make them think for themselves.
- Although there is still some way to go, the progress pupils make in mathematics is improving. This is because more practical activities are being provided so that pupils develop their understanding at the same time as practising their calculation skills.
- Typically, children enter the nursery with skills expected for their age. A few children have weaknesses in their literacy skills. They make expected progress across the Early Years Foundation Stage and most start Year 1 at the expected level. Although most children make good progress in their personal development, they do not have enough opportunities to practise their early writing skills.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make similar progress to their classmates in writing and mathematics but they are making better progress in reading as a result of the effective interventions to meet their individual needs. Teaching assistants provide useful support when it is needed, both in classes and in one-to-one sessions.
- Achievement in reading is good. Pupils make good progress in developing reading skills. Most read widely at home and regularly in school with a number of different adults. Younger pupils in Key Stage 1 are eager to read. They use their increasingly secure knowledge of letters and the sounds they make to read unfamiliar words. In the words of one pupil, 'My favourite thing is reading. I practise all the time.' Older pupils similarly regard reading highly and speak of their enjoyment of reading a wide range of books, including mystery and adventure stories and historical texts.
- The small numbers in each year group make it difficult to make comparisons between the performance of different groups of pupils. However, it is clear that, in 2013, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and supported by pupil premium funding outperformed their peers in mathematics. Funds are used to give access to a good range of extra-curricular activities and visits and to provide additional resources when they are needed. This reflects the school's commitment to providing an equal opportunity for all pupils.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching over time requires improvement because not all pupils are making good progress.
- In some lessons, the assessment of pupils' progress and the use of questioning to find out what they know and understand are not effective enough. As a result, the pace of learning for some pupils is sometimes too slow or too fast and this prevents them from achieving as well as they should. In these lessons, teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve by the end of the

lesson are too low and, as a result, some pupils work at tasks which are too easy for them. This is particularly the case for the most able pupils who do not always produce their best work and this hampers their progress. In a mathematics lesson in Key Stage 2, for example, pupils found the work on multiplication tables repetitive and teaching was not stimulating enough to move pupils on further.

- When pupils' interest and imagination is captured, they learn particularly well and make faster progress. For example, in a very effective lesson in the Years 5 and 6 class, pupils made brisk progress in learning how to apply their skills in grammar and punctuation when editing their writing about whirlwinds. The use of exciting resources prompted discussion about the risks and dangers of storms and severe weather conditions. Skilful questioning was used to entice pupils and extend their knowledge and understanding. Pupils worked very productively together to make sure their writing was of a high standard and to identify areas where it could be improved further.
- Teachers are conscientious in marking pupils' work regularly. However, they are not consistent in identifying how pupils can improve their work and they do not always check to see if pupils have responded to or learnt from their mistakes.
- Where teaching assistants are effectively deployed, they make a valuable contribution to pupils' progress. This was seen, for example, in the Years 1 and 2 class, where a group of less-able pupils were supported well to improve their ability to spell 'are' words accurately. The teaching assistant took every opportunity to reinforce reading skills and, as a result, pupils made good progress.
- In the Reception class, children are provided with good opportunities to develop confidence, independence and self-control. This ensures they are self-assured, exploring and finding things out for themselves. For example, children eagerly took responsibility for choosing their own wish, which they boldly added to the 'Wish Tree' in the outdoor learning area.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement overall. Although behaviour and attitudes in classes are generally positive, they vary depending on how interesting and challenging the learning is. Consequently, in some lessons, pupils too easily lose concentration and this leads to some unnecessary chatter and a lack of interest in learning.
- Pupils say behaviour has improved recently. They spoke of the range of new rewards and consequences which have helped them develop a clear understanding of what is expected of them. Although opportunities to be commended as 'Shooting Stars' or 'Hart Citizens' excite pupils, new approaches to promote good behaviour are not yet consistently applied across school.
- In some classes pupils, do not take enough pride in their work. This is particularly the case in writing, where work is sometimes presented carelessly and without thought. In some instances, the quantity of work produced by pupils is limited and its quality poor.
- Pupils behave well in the playground and around the school and are sociable in the dining hall. They are polite and courteous to each other, to adults and to visitors, know how to look after each other and listen attentively to each other and take turns. For example, the good behaviour seen in a school assembly, which focused on the theme of 'Treasure', contributed well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Records show that minor incidents of poor behaviour are dealt with swiftly and effectively, and the number of these incidents is declining rapidly. A small minority of parents do not feel that pupils behave well and that there are some incidents of bullying, but the large majority of parents who completed the online questionnaire and the representative group who met with the inspector were very positive about the work the school does to promote positive behaviour for learning.
- Pupils value their many roles of responsibilities within school. They feel they have a direct involvement in what happens in school through the school council and regular consultations on

areas such as educational visits. Pupils readily take on responsibility as playground friends, fund-raisers and assembly monitors.

- Pupils are proud of their school and say that teachers are 'caring and helpful'. For example, one pupil stated clearly that 'this is a great place to learn'. A group of pupils agreed that bullying is 'not allowed' and if name-calling very occasionally happens then pupils have confidence that 'teachers will sort it out quickly'.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. It is a caring, friendly and happy place that immediately addresses any concerns of pupils or parents with diligence. Pupils report feeling 'really safe' and have a secure understanding of e-safety as well as complete trust in all adults in the school to look after them.
- Attendance is above average and continues to improve because the school has implemented an effective range of strategies to ensure pupils attend regularly and on time.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because the quality of teaching is not strong enough to ensure pupils make consistently good progress. In addition, leaders have not yet ensured that teachers plan a sufficiently high level of challenge for the most able pupils so they can make the best possible progress.
- The acting headteacher's drive and ambition for the school to improve have begun to secure improvements across the school. In a short space of time, she has successfully established an effective team of senior leaders who are skilled in checking the quality of teaching and in giving teachers useful guidance on the action they need to take to improve their practice. However, not all middle leaders are sufficiently trained to check on and evaluate the quality of learning. As a result, they are unsure of the progress pupils make in some subjects.
- The acting headteacher, senior leaders and governors have an accurate view of the school's performance. The current school improvement plan is clearly focused on the key areas of raising pupils' attainment and improving teaching and has appropriate targets to meet these goals. The criteria used to enable leaders to know how successful they have been are easily measurable. However, new, rigorous targets for pupils' progress have not been in place for long enough to ensure good progress.
- Likewise, targets for teachers and leaders as part of the arrangements to improve their performance have only recently become thorough enough to ensure that pupils make better progress. While staff are now clear that they will only be rewarded by moving up the pay scale when pupils have done as well as they should have done, this has not always been the case in the past.
- There are new and effective procedures for checking the progress and attainment of all individuals and groups of pupils. As a result, senior leaders are confidently using information about pupils' progress to test out the impact of new initiatives. However, some teachers do not use this progress information well enough to plan and teach lessons that meet the needs of all pupils.
- Although the school's curriculum requires improvement, it provides good opportunities for pupils to develop their awareness of the world around them. Pupils study a range of different themes which stimulate them to learn. Visits, visitors and a wide range of experiences promote pupils' curiosity. The school is using the new primary sport funding wisely to promote sport across the school and develop staff expertise. Sports activities are well attended and pupils participate in a range of clubs that support their fitness and well-being well.
- Funding to support the learning of those pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium has been used successfully to develop their basic skills and to broaden their experiences of cultural activities.
- Staff morale is high. Staff speak optimistically of the future and believe that recent improvements will continue under the direction of the new leadership team.
- The school has established an effective partnership with Throston Primary School, which is

supporting the school's improvements by the sharing of expertise and good practice.

- Safeguarding and child protection procedures are effective and meet current requirements.
- The local authority has provided valuable support during a period of significant change, which is appreciated by the school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body of the two federated schools shows strong determination to derive full benefit from the federation in order to secure further improvement. This is evident, for example, in the high level of support it provides for the acting headteacher's plans to improve teaching and achievement. Members of the governing body regularly make visits to the school so they can gain first-hand evidence of the impact of new initiatives. Visits have covered a range of areas, such as numeracy, health and safety, and special educational needs.
 - Following high-quality training, governors are becoming increasingly effective in using information about the school's performance to ask searching questions to hold the senior leaders to account. As a result, governors know the school well and know precisely what the school needs to do to improve further. The governing body fulfils its statutory duties effectively and has a clear understanding of how the pupil premium funding is spent and the impact of this on the achievement of eligible pupils. Recently, they have been fully updated about arrangements to check the performance of staff and are mindful of the link between teachers' pay and 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

Unique reference number	111522
Local authority	Hartlepool
Inspection number	440806

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	94
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sacha Bedding
Headteacher	Jo Heaton
Date of previous school inspection	8 September 2011
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