

Hellingly Community Primary School

North Street, Hellingly, Hailsham, BN27 4DS

Inspection dates 12–13 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. It is not good because

- Achievement requires improvement because too few pupils make good progress from their starting points.
- Pupils make slower progress in writing than in reading and mathematics.
- Teachers' expectations of pupils' learning and behaviour are not always high enough. As a result, some pupils, often boys, find it difficult to apply themselves to their work and lose concentration.
- At times, the work set in lessons is too difficult for some pupils and too easy for others, so that progress slows.
- In some cases, the pace of learning is too slow to ensure that pupils make the best progress possible.
- Detailed school information about pupils' progress is not yet being used sharply enough by leaders at all levels to check whether improvements in teaching are raising achievement.
- The governing body does not yet hold the school sufficiently to account for pupils' achievement.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher has successfully steered the school through an unsettled period.
- Leaders have secured improvements in the quality of teaching. An element of weak teaching has been eradicated and the quality of teaching is improving.
- The teaching of basic reading skills has improved so that pupils are more confident about reading and able to read more successfully.
- Pupils feel very safe and well-cared for.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 16 lessons or part-lessons, including two lesson observations carried out jointly with the headteacher.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, the acting Chair of the Governing Body, senior leaders, teachers, members of staff, parents and pupils.
- Inspectors took account of the 51 responses to the online Parent View survey, in addition to letters received from parents during the inspection. Inspectors also took account of 17 staff questionnaire responses.
- Inspectors observed the school’s work and analysed a range of documents and policies, including the school improvement plan, information about pupils’ progress, attendance records and safeguarding policies and procedures.
- Inspectors looked at a sample of pupils’ work and listened to a number of Year 2 and Year 6 pupils reading.

Inspection team

Julie Sackett, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Helena Evans

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average primary school.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium in this school is below the national average. (Pupil premium is additional funding provided by the government to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children who are looked after by the local authority and certain other groups).
- The vast majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.
- The governing body was reconstituted in January 2013.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that all groups make good progress and achieve well, particularly in writing by ensuring that:
 - work is set at the right level for all pupils
 - more-able pupils are moved on more quickly in their learning during lessons
 - learning proceeds at a brisk pace
 - teachers' expectations of pupils' behaviour and learning during lessons are consistently high of all pupils
 - teachers have more opportunities to learn from the effective practice of colleagues.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management, including the governing body, by:
 - strengthening and sharpening the use of information about pupils' progress
 - ensuring that all leaders, including subject leaders and the governing body, are very clear about how well teaching is raising achievement
 - ensuring that governors have the skills necessary to hold the school to account.

An external review of governance should be undertaken to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because pupils do not make consistently good progress in all year groups. Weak teaching in the past has resulted in some underachievement and pupils are now making up for lost time. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics have been too variable over the past three years. In 2013, pupils' attainment was slightly below average in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6.
- In the national tests in 2013, the attainment of those pupils eligible for support by pupil premium funding was about 18 months behind their classmates in reading and writing, but in line with their classmates in mathematics. The gap between these pupils and their classmates narrowed in 2013. School information indicates that these pupils are now making similar progress to their classmates in mathematics and reading, but continue to make slower progress in writing. The school has rightly identified the need to secure further improvements, particularly in writing.
- More-able pupils, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make similar progress to their peers. They make good progress where the work set provides the appropriate level of challenge. However, they make slower progress where this is not the case.
- Children's knowledge and skills when they start in Reception are broadly in line with those expected of their age, although lower in early reading and writing skills. Children make steady progress during Reception Year so that most are well prepared for learning in Year 1.
- Pupils make slower progress in writing than in other subjects. Until this year, pupils have not had enough chances to practise their writing by completing longer pieces of work across different subjects. Last term, leaders introduced changes to the school timetable to rectify this, so that pupils now have more opportunities to write for different purposes and at length. As a result, pupils' progress in writing is beginning to accelerate in some year groups.
- The school has made changes to the way phonics (the link between sounds and letters) is taught in response to below average results in the Year 1 screening check in 2012. For example, pupils are now taught in ability groups for phonics. Consequently, the results of the Year 1 phonics screening check doubled in 2013 to above average levels and attainment in reading at the end of Year 2 was well above average. Pupils of all ages read with increasing confidence. Information provided by the school indicates that more pupils are on track to reach at least average levels of attainment and above in reading and writing at the end of Year 6 in 2014.
- The teaching of mathematics has improved. For example, pupils are taught a wider range of strategies to tackle number problems, including the use of practical apparatus to support their learning. As a result, pupils are making faster progress where teaching is consistently good.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because although it is improving, it has not consistently been good across all subjects and year groups. There is not yet enough consistently good and outstanding teaching to ensure that pupils achieve as well as they should.
- Pupils make slower progress where teachers' expect too little of pupils, both in their work-rate and the difficulty of the tasks they are given. Sometimes more-able pupils spend too long on tasks when they could move on to make more use of the skills they had learned in more challenging extension work. At other times, the work set for pupils is too difficult, so that some struggle to complete the work successfully.
- Sometimes, pupils do not achieve as much as they should during lessons, and some lose concentration, particularly boys, because the pace of learning is too slow.
- Where teaching is most effective, teachers use subject knowledge to plan lessons which interest pupils and motivate them to find out more, pupils are clear about what they need to do to be successful during the lesson and expectations are high. For example, during the inspection,

pupils in Years 1, 2 and 3 made rapid progress in their knowledge and understanding of phonics because teachers knew what they needed to do to move pupils on to the next stage in their learning. As a result, a boy in Year 1 was able to confidently read his work to his neighbour, using his phonics knowledge to check spellings as he read it aloud.

- Support for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is most effective where teaching assistants have a clear understanding of pupils' specific needs so that they are able to make a full and successful contribution during lessons.
- Effective teaching of mathematics in the school is characterised by high expectations, thought-provoking questions and a brisk pace to the learning. This was seen, for example, when a group of more-able Year 4 pupils were challenged to use and apply their mathematical knowledge of multiplication tables, while, in Year 2, pupils were able to understand how weights and measures are used in everyday situations, so that learning was meaningful. However, these strengths are not yet consistently in place across the school.
- Pupils' work is regularly marked so that pupils know how well they are doing in their learning. Teachers' written comments provide helpful pointers so that pupils know what they can do to improve their work. In most cases these are followed up by pupils.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Sometimes pupils lose interest during lessons and do less work than they should. Often those who lose concentration are boys. This is because teachers' expectations of behaviour are not consistently high enough of all pupils and work is not always matched sharply enough to pupils' needs. When this is the case, pupils' progress slows, although those pupils involved rarely disrupt the learning of their classmates. This view was confirmed by pupils who told inspectors that some pupils lose concentration during lessons.
- Most pupils behave well, want to do their best and enjoy school. They are respectful of adults, well mannered and co-operate with each other well. One pupil said, 'This is a kind and a friendly school.' Most parents who completed Parent View consider pupils to be safe and be well behaved at school.
- Pupils' overall attendance has been consistently above average during the past three years and school information about current attendance indicates that this continues to be the case.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils are appreciative of steps taken by the school to keep them safe, such as regular fire drills and the 'worry box' for pupils to post any concerns. They have a sensible view of how they can help to keep themselves safe and are confident that teachers will follow up any worries they have quickly.
- Pupils have a good understanding of what bullying is and the different forms it can take, such as cyber-bullying. They told inspectors that bullying is rare, a view supported by school records. The school follows up any concerns about bullying rigorously and systematic procedures are in place. Discrimination is not tolerated.

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because teaching and achievement are not yet good. There is too much difference in how well pupils do in some subjects and year groups.
- Leaders complete detailed and comprehensive information about pupils' progress, including information about the progress made by different groups of pupils. However, leaders' analyses of this information are often too lengthy and unwieldy. This makes it difficult for leaders, including the governing body, to secure a sufficiently clear view of how well improvements in teaching are raising achievement for different groups.
- Since joining the school, the headteacher has rightly focused on improving the quality of teaching. Her determination and commitment have been central in securing improvements in teaching. The school has an accurate view of its strengths and knows what needs to be done to

raise achievement.

- There is a positive, professional ethos in the school and staff morale is high. The school's commitment to ensuring equal opportunities for all pupils is reflected in the drive to close the gap between those pupils eligible for support from pupil premium funding and their classmates.
- At the school's request, the local authority has provided valuable support for the school and continues to work closely with school leaders. For example, the local authority worked with the school to check the accuracy of assessments in the past in Reception Year. The school has also opted to participate in a local authority project to raise pupils' achievement in reading.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. Events such as 'Around the World Arts Week' make a positive contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and to their enjoyment of learning.
- The school is using the sports funding appropriately to increase pupils' interest and participation. For example, over the past year, the school has increased the number of clubs available. The school has been successful in encouraging more pupils to attend clubs, including those who might not otherwise do so.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The role played by the governing body has rapidly developed since the headteacher's appointment. For example, governors regularly discuss progress against development targets with senior leaders. However, the extent to which they hold school leaders accountable is less well developed, particularly in relation to the use of progress information to raise questions about achievement. This has been identified as a development priority by the school so that governors can play a more effective role in school improvement. The acting Chair of the Governing Body works closely with the headteacher and is committed to securing further improvements. Governors are well informed about how different funds are spent, including pupil premium funding and sports funding, because these are routinely included on agenda for governing body meetings. They have an appropriate view of the quality of teaching and understand how an element of weak teaching in the past has affected pupils' achievement. They are well informed about how performance management is used to reward good teaching and support improvements. Safeguarding arrangements are rigorous, up to date and meet statutory requirements. The headteacher's thorough knowledge of child protection procedures ensures that this aspect is given an appropriately high focus.

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	114396
Local authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	431398

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	211
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev. Ronald Chatwin
Headteacher	Kyra Ward
Date of previous school inspection	24 June 2009
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