

Hempstead Infant School

Hempstead Road, Hempstead, Gillingham, Kent, ME7 3QG

Inspection dates 6–7 March 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

- Pupils' achievement is uneven and not good enough in reading, writing and mathematics Key Stage 1.
- There are gaps between the attainment of pupils supported through pupil premium funding and their peers.
- Some more able pupils do not make the progress they should in mathematics and writing.
- Not all pupils develop good spelling, punctuation and handwriting.
- Lower-attaining pupils do not always apply phonics (knowledge of letters and the sounds they make) well enough to develop their reading properly.
- Teaching requires improvement because pupils' progress is inconsistent from their starting points. Sometimes pupils' work is too hard or too easy.
- In some classes, pupils do not settle to their work as quickly as they should. Consequently, they become restless so that their behaviour and learning are not good.
- The pace of improvement since the previous inspection has not been fast enough.
- Leaders' checks on teaching have not been thorough enough to ensure all groups of pupils make good progress.
- Governors, many of whom are new, have yet to fully get to grips with holding the school to account.

The school has the following strengths

- Children achieve well in Reception because teaching and learning are good and there are so many interesting things to learn.
- More able pupils make good progress in reading throughout the school.
- Pupils are kept, and feel entirely, safe.
- The school is a welcoming community where children from a range of cultures and backgrounds get on well together.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 20 lessons, a third jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors held discussions with pupils, listened to a sample of them read and looked at a range of their work.
- Meetings were held with members of the governing body, senior leaders and teachers.
- The lead inspector met with a local authority representative.
- Inspectors considered the 56 responses to the online Parent View survey and the few letters sent by parents. They also spoke informally to parents.
- Inspectors considered responses to the 27 questionnaires returned by staff.
- Inspectors observed the school’s work and examined the school’s data on attainment and progress. They looked at a number of documents, including plans for improvement, safeguarding arrangements, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and records of school leaders’ observations of teaching.

Inspection team

Eileen Chadwick, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Janet Watson	Additional inspector
Peter Thrussell	Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is a little larger than the average-sized infant school. The Early Years department consists of three Reception classes. There are three classes in each of Years 1 and 2.
- The majority of pupils are White British. A slightly above average proportion comes from minority ethnic backgrounds, although the proportion who speaks English as an additional language is average. Many minority ethnic groups are represented in the school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average. The proportion at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average. The majority of these pupils have speech and language difficulties or behavioural, emotional and social difficulties.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for pupil premium funding, which is additional funding provided for looked after children, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children from service families, is well below average.
- Since the previous inspection, there have been many long term staff absences, including of senior leaders. The deputy headteacher managed the school when the headteacher was away from school in 2012 and when the headteacher was seconded to another school for the whole of last term. There have also been many recent changes to the governing body and a new Chair of the Governing Body has recently been appointed.
- Pupils may attend the before- and after-school clubs held on adjoining premises. These are privately managed, not part of this inspection and the reports can be found on Ofsted's website.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching in Key Stage 1 so that all pupils make good progress by :
 - ensuring literacy and mathematics are planned at the right level of difficulty, including for more able pupils in mathematics and lower attainers in literacy
 - enabling pupils to consistently apply their skills in phonics when reading and writing
 - ensuring that pupils behave well and are ready to learn
 - increasing opportunities for pupils to learn from teachers' marking of their work.
- Raise pupils' overall levels of attainment and speed up their progress in reading, writing and mathematics by:
 - raising the levels of attainment of pupils eligible for the pupil premium
 - improving pupils' spelling, handwriting and punctuation, and their ability to write in sentences
 - ensuring that lower attaining pupils practise their sounds before reading their books, and that pupils' reading records show parents their children's phonics targets.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - ensuring the checks made by school leaders identify the impact of teaching on how well different groups are learning, in order to improve the quality of teaching
 - enabling subject leaders to develop their roles, so that they play a full part in improving teaching and learning of English and mathematics across the school
 - ensuring governors receive training to understand how well the school is performing and to hold the school to account.

The school should undertake an external review of governance, to include a specific focus on the school's use of the pupil premium funding, in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils do not make consistently good progress throughout the school. Children get off to a good start in Reception, but their progress is slower in Key Stage 1 and requires improvement.
- Children's attainment on entry to Reception is broadly average and has been consistently above average at the end of Reception for several years. Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 2 has fluctuated and has not always been good enough compared with their attainment on entry to Year 1.
- In 2013, Year 2 pupils' overall attainment improved to above average after a dip in the previous year. Boys did less well than girls in both reading and writing. Inspection shows there are now no significant differences and both groups are now attaining above-average standards in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils' attainment and progress vary too much between subjects. Slightly fewer pupils reach the expected standards in reading and writing than they should and fewer attain higher levels in mathematics and writing than do so in reading.
- New systems for teaching phonics are leading to a rise in phonics attainment for the current Year 1 pupils, but there are still some weaknesses in their application of sounds and letters to their reading and writing. Some lower attaining pupils in Key Stage 1 read hesitantly because they are not given enough opportunities to practise their sounds before reading their books to an adult. This limits their ability to tackle new words.
- A few pupils throughout the ability range make too many spelling errors because they do not consistently learn to apply phonics knowledge well enough when writing. Some pupils' weaker punctuation and untidy handwriting also prevent standards rising more quickly. Lower attaining pupils in Key Stage 1 do not develop their ability to write in sentences or form their letters well enough.
- Occasionally, progress in mathematics slows for more-able pupils when there is too much repetition of their earlier learning. A few pupils in middle ability groups are capable of higher level work and this limits the proportion reaching higher levels.
- Pupils of different ethnic groups, including those with English as an additional language, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, make progress similar to their peers. Those with literacy learning difficulties make slow progress at times because the reading and writing tasks set for them are too hard.
- Pupils eligible for the pupil premium also make the same variable progress as their peers. In 2013, pupils' attainment was eighteen months behind their peers in reading and writing, and one year behind in mathematics. Gaps are starting to close, but not quickly enough, as Year 2 pupils' attainment is about six months behind that of their peers in reading, writing and mathematics.
- More-able pupils make good progress in reading throughout the school. By Year 2, they read avidly and are equally adept when reading for information or enjoyment. They apply phonics extremely well when reading new words.
- In Reception, the stimulating array of activities and adults' good knowledge of children's needs enable adults to provide worthwhile experiences which enable children to make good progress, including in speaking, listening, reading, writing and mathematics.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because there is not enough good and better teaching to make sure that all groups of pupils make the progress of which they are capable. While there is some stronger teaching, this is more consistent in Reception than in Key Stage 1, where good progress in reading, writing and mathematics is not always promoted well.
- In Key Stage 1, checks on pupils' learning are not used carefully when work is planned to challenge pupils of all abilities, including the more able in mathematics. There are times when

lower attaining pupils need more explanation before they start their work. On other occasions, the pace of learning slows when pupils take too long to get into groups or settle to and individual work. This limits the time pupils spend on their work and the time they have for writing or mathematics.

- This year, the school has revised the way it teaches phonics and now follows a consistent approach. However, these sessions do not always help pupils to learn well. Some teachers clearly demonstrate the relationships between sounds and letters but pupils do not always have enough opportunities to practise sounding out and reading and writing words for themselves.
- Pupils do not always know how to apply phonics to reading and writing in other literacy lessons. Not all pupils' home-school reading records include information about the key sounds and letters the pupils should know, which limits parents' ability to help their children.
- In some classes, pupils make good progress because additional adults are used well to support different groups of learners. In others, pupils' learning is not as strong because assistants are limited by the work provided by the class teacher, for example when the steps in reading and writing are too hard for lower attaining pupils.
- Some pupils work hard and build securely on their previous learning. For example, in a guided reading session in Year 1, activities were interesting and well planned. All groups, including those working on their own, made good progress in reading because of the way in which key reading skills, including application of phonics, were taught.
- Children in Reception have many interesting things to do. They work well with adults and one another and they make good progress. They are given a stimulating curriculum and teachers capture their interests. They give children good opportunities to develop their speaking, reading, writing, mathematical, physical and personal skills.
- Pupils' work is marked regularly and increasingly provides helpful comments, but there are too few opportunities for pupils to respond to teachers' marking. Consequently, they continue to make the same mistakes.

The behaviour and safety of pupils requires improvement

- Pupils' behaviour requires improvement because their attitudes to learning are not always positive, although pupils are friendly and polite.
- Where teaching requires improvement, pupils sometimes become distracted and fidgety, and lose concentration. Pupils waste time moving from one activity to another and carry on chatting when asked by the teacher to stop. Some teachers do not have high enough expectations of how pupils should behave and work hard.
- Too many lower attaining pupils do not take enough pride in their work, which is untidy because they do not learn to form their letters well enough. They often lack confidence when reading their books because they are not developing reading skills quickly enough.
- Although there are a few instances where pupils do not consider others when moving around the school, they are typically sensible when walking around the school and in the playground.
- Pupils from different backgrounds relate well to one another and learn to appreciate differences in people. The school is effective in promoting good relationships and discrimination of any kind is not tolerated.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. The site is secure and pupils say they feel extremely safe.
- Pupils have few concerns about bullying. They know what bullying is and what to do if they think it might be happening. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe when playing on the outdoor equipment or when using the internet.
- The overwhelming majority of parents who spoke to inspectors or completed Parent View agreed their children are well looked after and kept safe.
- Attendance is average, although rising, and strongly improved this year. Attendance has risen for all groups and persistent absence has been much reduced, including for White British pupils, boys, pupils with special educational needs and those pupils eligible for pupil premium. The

school has applied stringent attendance procedures this year and is working closely with the few families who do not send their children to school as regularly as they should.

The leadership and management require improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because senior leaders have not ensured consistently good teaching and progress. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have steered the school through a period of uncertainty because of staff changes. However, progress is not consistent enough, although some pupils make good progress, particularly in Reception.
- The pace of improvement has been too slow. Pupils' progress is regularly tracked, but some identified weaknesses have yet to be tackled to bring about pupils' consistently good progress and good teaching by all staff.
- The school has maintained a very positive ethos and recently ensured pupils' attendance and attainment, including in phonics, have begun to improve. This shows that there is the capacity to improve further.
- Senior and phase leaders regularly check teaching by observing lessons. However, lesson checks have not consistently identified the impact of teaching on the progress made by different groups of pupils in different subjects. This prevents staff knowing exactly how they can improve their teaching to help all groups to learn.
- Staff changes have slowed the development of subject leaders' roles. They are not yet having enough impact on driving improvements in teaching and learning, although they are currently receiving training on judging the quality of teaching for its impact on pupils' learning.
- School leaders have revised arrangements for managing staff performance and set clear targets for teachers. The results are used to obtain appropriate training, for example in phonics. Teachers' pay is now being linked to their performance.
- The school is strongly committed to ensuring equality of opportunity, although the school recognises that there is more to be done to ensure pupils in Key Stage 1 achieve as well as children in Reception.
- The curriculum is broad with opportunities for enrichment through a wide range of visits, and includes sporting activities with other schools. Pupils' spiritual, cultural, moral and social development is well provided for and generates their caring attitudes to one another.
- The school is using its sports funding to arrange for more sports coaches and increase professional training for staff in physical education. It has plans to measure the impact of this work.
- The local authority's support was light touch until September 2013, but the school found this insufficient. The local authority now provides medium level support which includes robust analysis of the school's performance as well as staff training.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are supportive and are keen for pupils to do well. However, the governing body is in a state of transition because many governors are new. While some understand the school's strengths and what it needs to do to improve, others need training to ensure they can fully challenge, as well as support the school, particularly in the areas of pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching. Not all have a good understanding of the management of teachers' performance or the implementation of the national Teachers' Standards and how these affect pay rises and promotion. They know how the pupil premium funding is spent, but are not clear about how to check its impact on pupils' progress. The governing body would benefit from an external review. Governors monitor spending carefully and ensure the school fulfils its statutory duties and make sure that requirements for safeguarding are met.

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	118555
Local authority	Medway
Inspection number	441041

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	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	265
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Nichola Saxby
Headteacher	Kate Dadd
Date of previous school inspection	23 June 2011
Telephone number	01634 365969
Fax number	01634 260275
Email address	office@hempsteadinf.medway.sch.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2014

