

St Helen's Primary School

Broomlands Close, St Helens, Ryde, PO33 1XH

Inspection dates 18–19 March 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	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.

- Children have a good start to school life in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- At whatever level they start, the vast majority of pupils do well and make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils' behaviour is good owing to the importance the school places on fostering good relationships.
- Pupils say, and their parents and carers agree, that they feel safe in the school.
- Leaders and managers, including governors, have a direct impact on the quality of teaching and learning together with pupils' achievement.
- Teaching is good overall and some is outstanding. Teachers ask searching questions to check pupils' understanding, maintain their interest and make them think hard.
- Attendance is improving year on year and is now average.
- Pupils say that the advantage of their small school is that every pupil is well known.
- The range of subjects pupils learn is planned around projects that are exciting, practical and enjoyable.
- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural education of pupils is a strength of the school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- Pupils know how well they have done because work is marked effectively but they do not always know the next steps in their learning in mathematics as written feedback is not always clear about how they can improve.
- Subject leaders have not yet had the chance to develop all the skills they need to bring about improvements and raise achievement.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed five lessons. One of the lessons was a joint observation with the headteacher.
- In addition the inspector made other visits to classes and an assembly, looked at pupils' work in books and listened to them read.
- Discussions were held with pupils, the headteacher, the senior teacher, subject leaders and seven governors. A meeting took place with the Local Leader of Education who has been supporting the school as a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector met informally with parents and carers at the beginning of the school day. There were too few responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) to provide any information. However, the inspector took into consideration the school's own parent questionnaire completed in January 2014 when there were over 20 responses. The responses to 13 staff questionnaires were also considered.
- A number of documents were viewed, including the school's own information about pupils' progress, the school's checks on its own effectiveness, records of how pupil premium funding is spent and its impact, records relating to behaviour and attendance and safeguarding documents.

Inspection team

Gay Whent, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Helen's Primary School is much smaller than the average sized primary school.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in a Reception class. The rest of the pupils are taught in three mixed-age classes: a Years 1 and 2 class, a Years 3 and 4 class and a Years 5 and 6 class.
- The school was in a federation with Brading Primary School until May 2013. At that time there was an Interim Executive Board. This was dissolved by agreement in May 2013. The school has had its own governing body since that time.
- The school is supported by a Local Leader of Education who is headteacher of Park Gate Primary School, Southampton.
- Almost all pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average. These pupils have a variety of barriers to learning including speech, language and communication difficulties.
- The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium (extra government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children looked after by local authorities and children of service families) is below average.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, particularly marking and assessment in mathematics, by:
 - building on existing high-quality practice in the marking of writing, clearly specifying the next steps pupils need to take to improve their work.
- Strengthen the impact of leadership and management by making sure that:
 - key subject leaders are able to observe the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects across the school.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Current pupils are making good progress across all key stages. In the past, attainment has been close to the national average but it is rising. Achievement is not yet outstanding as pupils do not make rapid and sustained progress.
- Attainment on entry to the school is broadly in line with national expectations but with some variation between the small groups of children year on year. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress in the Reception class because of the careful planning, good teaching and the exciting range of activities provided. They are well prepared for their entry to Year 1.
- Children's knowledge of letters and the sounds (phonics) they make is now highly developed because linking sounds to letters is carefully modelled, practised and reinforced in a range of interesting writing activities.
- Standards in reading, writing and mathematics are above the national average at the end of Key Stage 2. Current school information shows that pupils currently in Year 6 are achieving very well with over half having already met the national rates of progress.
- The achievement of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is good. This is because their needs are accurately identified and their progress is assessed regularly throughout each term. Teachers plan their work at exactly the right level of difficulty.
- Pupils enjoy reading. They read fluently, confidently and with expression. Older pupils share their love of authors from Enid Blyton to Tolkien.
- Pupil premium funding is used well to provide the best help for the small numbers of pupils needing support with their learning. How funding is used is based on a close assessment of each pupil's progress and needs. Its use is regularly reviewed to ensure that eligible pupils make at least similar progress to that of others throughout the school.
- The school ensures that it promotes equality of opportunity for all pupils. More-able pupils do well as they are given challenging tasks and their needs are accurately identified in teachers' plans.

The quality of teaching

is good

- The quality of teaching over time is good and some of it is outstanding. Pupils' understanding is checked frequently through searching questions which maintain their interest, encourage them to think hard and attempt difficult tasks. For example, in a lesson on creating fairground models, pupils in Years 5 and 6 applied their knowledge of careful and accurate measurement to construct a wooden framework for their detailed design.
- Teachers and their teaching assistants work together in effective teams. In the words of one member of staff: 'I feel very proud to be a part of our hard-working team. I know how much pride and effort we put into providing the best learning environment possible for our children.'
- Teaching assistants are used successfully to lead specific groups supporting pupils' learning. One group of pupils enjoyed an activity which focused on developing their speed and fluency in writing. They were keen to show the progress they have made since the start of the school year in their books. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs learn well as a result of the resources and the support they receive, which is finely matched to their next learning steps.
- The school's focus on writing has led to the creation of an attractive 'mark-making buffet bar' in the Reception class where pupils select glue, invitations, pens or envelopes when they carry out their writing. This continues across the ages. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 created poems about the sea, where one described a 'dance with a friendly squid under the sea, hunt with sting rays, they swim – peaceful with me'. 'Snowflakes whisper sweet songs to each other. Snowflakes flutter past, each new and unique' was part of a well-crafted sonnet by a Year 6 pupil.

- In a Years 1 and 2 mathematics lesson the teacher engaged pupils closely with the subject by setting 'I can' challenges so that they quickly learnt to add single-digit numbers to larger ones and were aware of when they cross the 'tens multiple'.
- Pupils understand their successes and their next steps for improvement because the steps are highlighted in the quality feedback they receive on their writing. In addition, the feedback effectively acknowledges when pupils have applied these next steps in their next piece of work. Pupils' self-assessments of their work are also clearly evident. This is not always the case in mathematics books, however, and so pupils are not as aware of how to improve and their progress is hindered. This is why the quality of teaching is not yet outstanding.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils behave well in their lessons and are enthusiastic learners. They take care of their books and their classrooms are well looked after. Pupils say that typical behaviour in the school is like this. Sound relationships are at the heart of this behaviour and pupils are keen to do well in their work. Parents and carers spoken to informally and staff and governors agree that behaviour is good. Any incidents are carefully logged and discussed with pupils and their families.
- Pupils behave sensibly when they walk to assembly and when they arrive and leave the school. Behaviour is not yet outstanding owing to the sometimes over-boisterous behaviour of a small number of pupils and a lack of space when they are all using the playground.
- Parents and carers bring their children into the school hall punctually at the start of the day which enables the day to run very smoothly. The school has worked hard to improve attendance which is now average. The importance of regular attendance is featured in newsletters.
- Bullying is rare. Pupils have a good understanding of the different forms which bullying can take. They know what to do if it should occur.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say they feel safe at the school and their parents and carers and staff unanimously agree. Pupils talk confidently about how to keep safe when using the internet. A whole school e-safety training day earlier this term involved parents and carers, staff, governors and pupils.
- Older pupils enjoy their responsibilities at playtimes, particularly when they look after children who are new to the school so that they are able to settle more quickly. All staff place great importance on fostering good relationships and tackling any discrimination immediately.

The leadership and management are good

- The school is well led by the headteacher who is determined for all the pupils to achieve well and for her staff to be well trained. The school is proud of what it stands for: 'a small school with a big heart where happy children flourish in a safe and caring family environment'.
- The headteacher and her senior leader evaluate the school's effectiveness accurately and have high expectations of themselves, staff and pupils. Subject leaders have created action plans with clear priorities for improvement. They check their areas of responsibility using information about pupils' progress and pupils' work. However, they do not yet undertake lesson observations or demonstrate exemplary teaching in order to have an impact on improving the quality of teaching. Leadership and management are not outstanding as the quality of teaching over time is not yet outstanding throughout the school.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils learn about different cultures and religions, including celebrations such as Hannukah. Interesting topics include 'The Sea and Me', 'What a Performance' and 'Fighting Fit' which are linked to a wide range of local visits.
- The local authority provides very effective support, in particular the link with another local

headteacher, and training for the school. This has had an immediate impact and been very well received.

- The school has good capacity to improve.
- The primary school sports funding has been carefully allocated. It has been used for a wide range of opportunities to enable all teaching staff to learn new skills from specialists. Experiences for all pupils are being extended so that they know how to lead a healthy lifestyle. An action plan is in place and its impact closely checked by governors.
- All safeguarding arrangements are met, including checks on adults working with pupils.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is very effective because, since the school left the federation, the Chair of the Governing Body has set up an efficient, focused and dedicated team where every member is totally committed to school improvement. Governors know their school well, as a result not only of their training but also of their monthly meetings and many visits to school, each of which has a predetermined focus. Governors question the school closely in order to clarify their thinking. They have a very good grasp of how the performance of staff is managed and encourage staff training. Pay is linked to performance. They understand what is being done to tackle underperformance. Improving standards are at the heart of what they do. Both national figures and the school's own information are used to check pupils' progress. Governors ensure that finance is carefully allocated and checked, including those specific sums such as the pupil premium funding.

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	118169
Local authority	Isle of Wight
Inspection number	431020
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	85
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jacqui Lamb
Headteacher	Jane Loader
Date of previous school inspection	22 May 2012
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