

Hurdsfield Community Primary School

Hulley Road, Macclesfield, Cheshire, SK10 2LW

Inspection dates 29–30 April 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		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils' behaviour and their enthusiasm for learning are outstanding. They feel entirely safe in school and as a result, their learning and personal development thrives.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage have a good start to their education from very low starting points.
- By the end of Year 6, pupils achieve well. Progress is currently good throughout the school and is improving quickly. Standards reached by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are average.
- Teaching is consistently good. There is some outstanding teaching. Teaching takes good account of all pupils' abilities. Pupils enjoy the challenges in lessons that bring the best out in them.
- Leaders and managers, including governors, are strongly focused on driving the school forward. They check its work robustly and have an accurate view of strengths and weaknesses.
- Teaching and learning are managed well. Teaching has strengthened and this is now having a good impact on pupils' progress.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Standards in writing are not improving as quickly as those in reading and mathematics.
- There are weaknesses to be addressed in spelling and grammar and the way in which pupils express their ideas.
- There is not yet enough outstanding teaching to result in pupils' outstanding progress overall.
- The best teaching practice is not yet fully capitalised on as a model to help others improve their teaching further.
- The quality of marking in subjects other than English is not good enough.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector saw eight lessons and part lessons, two of which were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- The school's work was discussed with teachers, members of the governing body and with a group of parents. There were also discussions with pupils and a representative from the local authority.
- The response from parents via the online questionnaire (Parent View) did not represent a clear picture of parents' views overall. However, the inspector took account of a recent survey of parents' views undertaken by the school, as well as questionnaires completed by staff members.
- The inspector observed the school's work and examined a wide range of documentation which included: national assessment data and the school's own assessments; minutes from governing body meetings; the school's own view of its work; curriculum information; safeguarding documents and samples of pupils' work.

Inspection team

Kevin Johnson, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average sized primary school in which most pupils are White British.
- The school roll has increased significantly since the previous inspection. This has brought an increase in the number of pupils with disabilities or who have special educational needs, as well as a few pupils from Eastern European countries who do not speak English when they arrive.
- An above average proportion of pupils is supported by school action plus or has a statement of special educational needs.
- The proportion supported by school action is also above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by pupil premium funding is double the national average for primary schools. The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6.
- There are strong links with a children's centre which shares the school site.
- There is pre-school setting on the same site that is not managed by the governing body and was not part of this inspection.
- The school provides a breakfast club during term-time.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching to outstanding, and thereby raise standards in writing, by:
 - using the best teaching practice already in the school as a model for other teachers to emulate and improve their own practice in all lessons
 - extending the current marking system for literacy to all subjects
 - always insisting on pupils using the correct spelling and grammar in all subjects
 - increasing opportunities for pupils to carefully consider precise vocabulary before they write
 - providing enough opportunities for pupils to apply their skills and write at length in a variety of subjects and for different purposes.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children start the Reception Year with skills that are well below those typical for their age. They generally lack confidence, and their understanding of the world is at a very early stage of development, as well as their early reading and writing skills.
- Children are taught well and are provided with activities that both interest and challenge them. They make good progress especially in their personal skills. Interest in reading and writing develops well because of the confidence they gain from good teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds that they make).
- Teachers have forged good links with the children's centre making it easier to help to fill gaps in their early learning and development and to help children off to a better start.
- The proportion of children who achieve a good level of development at the end of the Reception Year is similar to the national average and a few children are more advanced in some of the things that they do. This represents good progress from their starting points.
- Good progress continues in Years 1 and 2. Pupils' reading continues to thrive. The proportion of pupils in Year 1 who achieved the expected standard in the national phonics screening check in 2013 was above average. This has had a good impact on standards in reading in Year 2, which have improved significantly, especially in those on track to reach the higher Level 3 this year.
- Current standards in writing and mathematics in Year 2 are average. Again, a good improvement on previous years and an indication of how the school has successfully halted an earlier downward trend.
- The school has worked successfully to make sure that pupils new to the school settle in quickly and has changed the way it works, especially with disabled pupils or those with special educational needs. Individual plans are carefully matched to what pupils need to learn. A variety of teaching support helps them to make good progress towards their targets.
- In the current Year 6, for example, where there are only 10 pupils in the class, five have special educational needs. All are on track to achieve the national average standards in reading. They are making good progress in mathematics and writing from their starting points and some are exceeding the targets expected of them.
- Pupil who join the school unable to speak English, rapidly become fluent speakers and often win the admiration of classmates who comment on how well they have done.
- Standards overall in Year 6 are broadly average. Again, this shows good improvement on previous years. Progress is good throughout Key Stage 2. Reading and mathematics are stronger than writing, which is the school's current focus for improvement.
- In writing, there are weaknesses in spelling and grammar and in pupils' knowledge of vocabulary. Also, pupils are not able to sustain their ideas to write sufficiently at length.
- Reading is a success. Pupils in Year 2 are very enthusiastic readers and develop their skills well by reading regularly in school and at home. By the end of Year 6, pupils read confidently using good expression, including when reading texts for the first time. They have good understanding of what they read and know how important reading is to their learning.
- The most able pupils make good progress because the school provides for their learning. The challenge is particularly effective in mathematics, where three of the 10 Year 6 pupils are working towards the highest Level 6. As well as the support they receive in school, they attend mathematics sessions at the local high school for additional challenge. Pupils with greatest potential are moved up a class to work at a higher level. The most able writers also have special sessions led by a governor whose expertise is in writing.
- The gaps in the standards reached between those supported by the pupil premium and other pupils in the school are closing. The use of the funding is reviewed regularly by school leaders and governors to make sure that all pupils have equal opportunities to achieve their best. Overall, this group of pupils makes similar good progress to others. Current assessments show that pupils known to be eligible for free school meals in Year 6 generally attain as well as others in the school in each subject.

The quality of teaching is good

- New appointments to the teaching staff since the previous inspection and a good programme of training to improve skills have strengthened the overall quality of teaching and learning. The rate of pupils' progress and the standards they now achieve are improving quickly.
- Although there are examples of outstanding practice in classrooms, these examples are not used sufficiently well to raise the overall quality of teaching and pupils' learning further from good to outstanding.
- The whole-school drive to boost reading has been successful. Pupils have a good selection of books to choose from and know how to gain information when they need it. Each pupil meets their reading buddy, from a different year group, weekly to help their reading and compare progress.
- Training for teachers in the teaching of writing has been a main focus recently. Pupils' speaking skills are encouraged through discussion and drama in literacy lessons to help pupils improve the fluency of their writing. This is having some positive impact, for example, Year 6 pupils wrote short, but good descriptions of the witches in *Macbeth*.
- Expectations regarding correct grammar and spelling are variable, and drama and discussion do not always provide pupils with the range of vocabulary they need to write accurately, and at length in different subjects. For example, when writing a science investigation about plants, some key words such as 'nutrients' and 'germination' were not in Year 6 pupils' vocabulary.
- Mathematics is taught well. Every day begins with a mental arithmetic session so pupils learn about different number systems, multiplication tables and ways of calculating quickly. Other mathematics lessons give pupils opportunities to apply their knowledge to solving real-life problems. Pupils are challenged effectively according to their abilities and some are working well above the expected levels for their age.
- Pupils learn well in other subjects. For example, there is good quality art work displayed around the school, including some impressive models of ships. Music has a high profile in the school and pupils achieve well in sports tournaments.
- Teaching resources, including technology, are used well to help pupils learn.
- Classroom staff know pupils well and are very sensitive to their particular needs. Pupils feel safe and confident as a result. They cooperate with adults, help each other, and do their best in lessons.
- The school's systems for assessing pupils' progress are good. Learning is checked in lessons effectively as pupils work, and through good questioning. The marking of pupils' work has been a focus for development and is now good in literacy books. A very strong feature is the 'fix-it' time pupils have to correct and improve their work. Good quality marking, however, is not seen across all subjects. Comments from pupils show that they have limited understanding of how well they are doing, for example, in their topic work.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils are extremely attentive and keen to learn in lessons. They do not waste their time but always work hard to finish work and please their teachers.
- Behaviour around the school is excellent. In the playground, for example, pupils play amicably and safely. They play in mixed groups and older pupils are very watchful over the younger ones. Pupils' general behaviour and table manners in the dining room are a credit to them.
- Pupils are very mindful of others' different backgrounds and circumstances and raise generous amounts for various charities. Respect for others is the very strong basis for their excellent relationships. Politeness and good manners are a hallmark of pupils' friendly, welcoming nature.
- They contribute greatly to the school's highly positive ethos and its day-to-day running by taking on a range of responsibilities, from serving playtime snacks to giving all pupils a voice through the school council. Recycling, road safety officers and play leaders also make a notable

contribution and pupils have written to the local council about addressing the problem of litter near the school.

- Pupils keep the school tidy and always dress neatly in school uniform. They have improved on last year's average attendance and are making good headway toward this year's challenging attendance target. The well-attended breakfast club encourages pupils to arrive early as well as providing additional care which parents appreciate.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding.
- Pupils state adamantly that there is no bullying in school and only a little name-calling. They are very confident about the high quality of care and safety that staff provide. Parents overwhelmingly agree with their children's views.
- Pupils understand different forms of bullying, including cyber-bullying, and are very confident about how to deal with it, as well as possible dangers outside school.

The leadership and management are good

- Leaders fully recognise the school's value to the community and are totally committed to its success. Staff and governors are a strong team and work energetically to include all pupils and provide the best opportunities for them.
- Issues from the previous inspection have been dealt with well, resulting in improved outdoor learning for Reception class children and better marking by teachers in pupils' literacy books.
- Maintaining teaching quality has been central to the school's work. The appointment of new teachers has improved the senior leadership and strengthened teaching generally. A rigorously planned schedule for checking on teachers' performance and the results of their work has focused minds on improvement and brought an upturn in standards and progress.
- Teachers are aware that checks on their work are underpinned by the Teachers' Standards, and that they are accountable for pupils' progress. Leaders are not complacent. Training for teachers to improve their skills continues to play an important part in improving teaching. Leaders know that there is room for further improvement and have set their sights on capitalising on the best teaching that exists in the school to raise the overall quality to outstanding. However, this strategy is yet to be fully implemented.
- The support from the local authority has been fairly light touch, but has kept leaders focused on standards throughout the changing nature of the school's roll. There is every confidence that under current leadership the drive for further improvement is secure.
- Middle leaders, in charge of subjects, maintain a good curriculum that enables pupils to achieve well and enjoy their learning. It is enhanced by links with the high school so that pupils learn Spanish and are challenged effectively in mathematics.
- The physical education curriculum has broadened as a result of the effective use of the primary school sports funding, which provides for activities before and after school, as well as raising the level of teachers' skills. Pupils enjoy a good selection of clubs after school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors work closely with school staff and offer good support, as well as gaining a good knowledge about how well the school works. They analyse assessment data and check pupils' progress regularly, taking a particular interest in the progress of potentially most vulnerable pupils. There is a good range of expertise among governors whose challenge in the past has successfully helped the school to improve pupils' reading. They now focus their challenge and support on standards in writing. Governors have a clear understanding of teachers' performance and how that is linked to any salary progression. The governing body carefully checks the spending of pupil premium funding, as well as the impact of the use of the primary school sports funding. Other statutory duties, including the management of the school's finances, are performed efficiently. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils fully meet all requirements and are highly effective in ensuring that pupils feel safe and well cared for in school.

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	111233
Local authority	Cheshire East
Inspection number	439950

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	105
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lesley Stevens
Headteacher	Celia Pickard
Date of previous school inspection	25 June 2009
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