

Hersden Village Primary School

Shaftesbury Road, Hersden, Canterbury, CT3 4HS

Inspection dates 15–16 May 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	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.

- Pupils make good progress and achieve well. Standards at the end of Year 2 have risen since the academy opened.
- There is an improving trend of achievement across the school.
- As a result of good teaching, children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make consistently good progress.
- Pupils enjoy school, are enthusiastic about learning and feel exceptionally safe.
- Behaviour and attitudes to learning are good.
- Expectations of the quality of pupils' written work are consistently high across the school.
- Pupils supported by the pupil premium funding make good progress. The progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is good.
- The Executive Principal provides excellent leadership.
- Staff benefit from the opportunity to work with others from within the trust. This is helping to bring about improvements to teaching and pupils' achievement.
- Governors are knowledgeable, effective and committed to the school. They challenge school leaders robustly in relation to standards and pupils' progress.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is not enough outstanding teaching to make sure that all pupils make rapid progress.
- Progress in reading for the current Year 6 pupils has been slower than in other year groups.
- Newly appointed leaders of learning are still developing their skills and confidence as leaders and managers across the emerging family of schools within the academy trust.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching in eight lessons, seven of which were seen together with school leaders.
- Meetings were held with a group of pupils, the Chair and the Vice-Chair of the Governing Body and the school's senior and subject leaders.
- The inspector took account of the 18 responses to the staff questionnaire. There were very few responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). However, the inspector took account of a recent parental survey conducted by the school.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a range of school documents, including records of the school's checks on the quality of teaching, minutes of governing body meetings, the school improvement plan and records relating to behaviour, attendance, safeguarding and the tracking of pupils' progress. He also looked closely at pupils' written work for the current school year, and listened to pupils read.

Inspection team

George Logan, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Hersden Village Primary School is smaller than an average-sized primary school.
- Most of the pupils are from White British backgrounds, although there are a few pupils of Gypsy/Roma heritage. A very small number of pupils are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is slightly below average. The proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium, which is additional funding for pupils known to be entitled to free school meals or those looked after by the local authority, is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Hersden Community Primary School formed a hard federation with Sturry Church of England Primary School in February 2009. This federation converted to become The Stour Academy Trust from September 2012. A third school is due to join the trust from June 2014. An Executive Principal is in overall charge of the trust, with separate heads of school on each school site.
- When the predecessor school, Hersden Community Primary School, was last inspected on 13 March 2012, it was judged to be good.
- There are four classes. Reception children are taught as a discrete year group. All other classes have pupils from more than one year group.
- Adjacent to the school site there is an independent pre-school and a children's centre. These are managed and inspected separately.
- The school offers a daily breakfast club which was looked at as part of this inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching so that all pupils make rapid progress by:
 - ensuring that older pupils have secure skills in phonics (letters and the sounds they represent) so that they become more confident readers
 - making sure that pupils work at a brisk pace in lessons, especially when working on their own.
- Develop further the leadership skills of current leaders of learning to ensure consistently high impact of their work across all the schools in the trust.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Pupils achieve well. Good teaching and leadership have brought about many improvements in achievement over the past five terms. Staff expectations are high and pupils are enthusiastic learners.
- Children enter Reception with skills that are generally well below those typical for their age. Good teaching, close engagement with articulate adults and a stimulating learning environment together ensure that children make good progress. Many children leave Reception having reached a good level of development.
- A well-above-average proportion of Year 1 pupils attained the expected standard in the phonics screening check in 2013. Improved teaching of phonics is bringing about an improvement in pupils' skills.
- Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 2 was broadly average in mathematics and writing in 2013, reflecting good progress in Key Stage 1. Although attainment in reading was below average in 2013, current data and pupils' work show that pupils are making good progress in all areas.
- Attainment at the end of Year 6 in 2013 was below average in mathematics, reading and in grammar, punctuation and spelling, but broadly average in writing. This, however, still represented good progress from their starting points.
- Standards in the current Year 6 have risen in mathematics and writing compared to last year. Progress in reading has, however, been less rapid because pupils are not always confident in using skills in phonics to read unfamiliar words.
- Pupils supported by pupil premium funding in Year 6 in 2013 were, on average, around three terms behind the others in reading, writing and mathematics. However, the gap was greater in grammar, punctuation and spelling than elsewhere. These pupils are currently making similar progress to their classmates. The gap in achievement between eligible pupils in Year 6 and their classmates, while greater than elsewhere, has been significantly reduced.
- Pupils from Gypsy/Roma backgrounds attend frequently and achieve standards only slightly below those typically achieved by the majority of pupils. The few pupils at an early stage of learning English as an additional language make rapid progress because of the high priority given to developing language skills.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are supported well. The progress of this group, as others, has improved over time and these pupils now achieve well.
- More-able pupils are being given increasingly challenging work. They make good progress and are now reaching higher standards than previously.

The quality of teaching

is good

- The overall quality of teaching is good, with some outstanding practice emerging. Staff have high expectations of the quality of pupils' work, particularly their written work. They take care to plan work at the right level of difficulty for their pupils.
- Teachers know how to provide the right experiences to motivate and challenge pupils. This was evident, for example, in a successful mathematics lesson in Year 6. The tasks, which centred on solving money problems, were stimulating and were matched well to pupils' prior learning. Pupils worked productively with their partners. Marking and feedback in pupils' books was thorough and motivating. One pupil with additional needs received skilled support from a teaching assistant, promoting learning well.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage benefit from consistently effective teaching. This was evident in a good phonics session where children were highly engaged and keen to demonstrate their writing skills. Staff have a clear understanding of how to move children's learning on.
- Close tracking of progress and well-targeted support ensure that pupils eligible for additional

funding make increasingly good progress.

- The school gives priority to the improvement of pupils' reading skills and, overall, reading is taught well. The great majority of pupils read confidently and with understanding, and are highly motivated by the school's reward scheme for regular home reading.
- Current Year 6 pupils did not benefit from good quality teaching of phonics early in their school career. As a result, their progress in reading has been less rapid than that of other pupils.
- Occasionally, pupils' learning slows when staff do not make sure that they work quickly enough, especially when working on their own.
- Teachers' marking indicates specific areas for improvement and this helps pupils to move on with their learning. Pupils usually respond to marking with written comments. They have specific targets to identify the next steps in their learning and know what is needed to reach a higher level.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils display consistently positive attitudes and their commitment to learning contributes well to their good progress.
- Past behavioural issues have been addressed. Inappropriate behaviour, or exclusions, are rare. Effective behaviour management systems ensure a consistent response to any issues. No parents and carers indicated any concerns about behaviour.
- The recently established nurture support successfully meets the needs of pupils who need extra help to ensure that they engage fully with education.
- Pupils eagerly undertake responsibilities as, for example, buddies linked to new Reception children, thus contributing to the smooth running of the school community.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils say that they feel very safe and are highly impressed by the school's efforts to keep them safe through the erection of a new inner fence and security system.
- The school ensures that pupils recognise a range of risks. Year 6 pupils understand the dangers of cyber-bullying, for example. They have a very thorough awareness of how to keep themselves safe.
- Pupils recognise that bullying may take many forms, but say that this is not an issue. They feel that any problems will be addressed by the school.
- Attendance is broadly average. The school has a rigorous approach to non-attendance.
- The well-managed breakfast club makes excellent provision for those few pupils who arrive early at school. They have access to a plentiful breakfast and a range of activities, indoors and outside.

The leadership and management are good

- The Executive Principal provides excellent leadership and has successfully driven significant improvements in teaching and achievement since the school became an academy. There is good capacity for further improvement.
- Staff in the school have benefited from the chance to work with others within the expanding academy trust, with teachers across the trust working flexibly across different schools. There are good opportunities for the professional development of individual heads of schools who can be deployed to tackle specific issues in schools across the trust.
- Leaders of learning have responsibility for particular subjects and areas, such as Early Years Foundation Stage provision, and act as consultants across all the schools. Many have played an important part in improving the quality of teaching and learning. However, some leaders of learning are at an early stage in developing their leadership skills and are not yet fully involved in driving improvement.
- Current leaders have an accurate overview of the quality of teaching. Checks on the quality of

teaching are extremely thorough, taking account of all aspects of a teacher's work.

- Systems for managing staff performance are rigorous and teachers are set aspirational targets, underpinned by good training opportunities. There is a close alignment between teachers' performance and their pay progression.
- The school has an accurate view of itself. Improvement plans identify the correct priorities.
- The impact of pupil premium funding is monitored closely. Additional teaching is provided for pupils at risk of falling behind. Staff modify provision to ensure better gains in learning.
- The curriculum meets pupils' needs. The school prioritises literacy and numeracy in order to raise achievement in these areas. The development of other subjects is less consistent and the school is aware of the need to include more scientific and technological activities. Extra-curricular and enrichment provision is good.
- Planning for the use of the primary sports funding is effective. Targeted staff training is ensuring that initiatives are sustainable. New sporting clubs ensure that more pupils now participate in sporting activities.
- The academy trust has developed effective structures to support its schools and secure necessary improvements.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. There are good links with local community groups, including Canterbury City Council, and good opportunities for outside visits. Partnerships with many other schools, often outside the academy trust, contribute well to staff development and pupils' learning. Links with parents and carers have improved significantly. Safeguarding arrangements fully meet national requirements.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governance is undergoing change as the academy trust introduces local governing bodies, with an overarching Board of Directors. New governors with specific skills are being recruited. Current governors bring considerable commitment, so ensuring a clear strategic direction. They engage fully in school self-evaluation and development planning. They undertake training regularly and have a secure understanding of how the school's performance compares with that of other schools, making good use of available data. Minutes of governing body meetings show that governors hold school leaders fully to account. Governors are committed to tackling discrimination and promoting good relationships so that all pupils have an equal opportunity to succeed. They have a good understanding of the quality of teaching. They ensure that pay and promotion are closely aligned to evidence of teachers' effectiveness. Governors understand the impact of decisions about the use of pupil premium funding to close gaps in pupils' achievement. Governors and senior leaders ensure that all statutory duties 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	138579
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	440094

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	82
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Georgina Glover
Principal	Simon O’Keefe (Executive Principal)
Date of previous school inspection	No previous inspection
Telephone number	01227 710414
Fax number	01227 712162
Email address	principal@stouracademytrust.org.uk

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