

Hobbs Hill Wood Primary School

Peascroft Road, Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire, HP3 8ER

Inspection dates 3–4 July 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		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher, working closely with senior leaders, is bringing about improvements in teaching and pupils' achievement.
- Pupils' reading and writing skills are rapidly improving, particularly those of older pupils.
- Disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and those whose first language is not English make good progress.
- In Year 6 standards in reading, writing and mathematics are above average.
- Teaching is good. There is some highly effective practice.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe, enjoy school and behave well.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted effectively.
- Governors are supportive of the school and have set challenging targets for the senior leadership team.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Over time, too few pupils have reached the age-related expectations in the Year 1 phonics checks.
- The outdoor area in the Early Years Foundation Stage is not used well enough to promote children's learning in mathematics.
- Pupils in Key Stage 1 do not understand or use a wide range of mathematical terminology.
- Teachers do not always provide younger pupils, including the more-able, with sufficient challenge in mathematics or offer them clear guidance on how they can improve.
- The measures used to assess the impact of the actions set out in the school improvement plan are not sufficiently precise.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 15 lessons, of which three were observed jointly with the headteacher. In addition, the inspectors made a number of shorter visits to lessons and attended two assemblies. They heard some pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 read.
- Meetings were held with members of the governing body and staff, groups of pupils and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors observed the school’s work and looked at a wide range of documentation, including the data the school has collected on pupils’ attainment and progress, procedures for keeping pupils safe and the improvement plan.
- In making their judgements, inspectors took account of their discussions with parents, the 85 responses to the Parent View online questionnaire and 50 questionnaires returned by members of staff.

Inspection team

David Wynford-Jones, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Robert Bourdon-Pierre	Additional Inspector
Vanessa Love	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Hobbs Hill Wood Primary is much larger than the average primary school.
- The large majority of the pupils are of White British origin. The remainder come from a number of different minority ethnic backgrounds. The largest group is of Pakistani heritage.
- The proportion of pupils speaking English as an additional language is broadly average. Very few are at the early stages of learning English.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is average. The proportion identified for additional support through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average. Most of these pupils have speech, language and communication needs.
- The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium is below average. This is additional government funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- In 2013, the school met the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Not all of the nursery children move into the Reception classes. Those that do are joined by a sizeable number, most of whom have attended other settings.
- The privately run on-site breakfast and after-school clubs did not form part of this inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards and accelerate pupils' progress in mathematics throughout the school by:
 - ensuring teachers in the Early Years Foundation Stage make more effective use of the outdoor area to develop children's mathematical skills
 - developing Key Stage 1 pupils' understanding and use of mathematical terminology
 - raising teachers' expectations of what younger pupils, including the more-able, can achieve
 - making certain that teachers' marking consistently informs the pupils of the next steps they need to take to improve their work and check that pupils have acted on the advice.
- Consolidate the improvements in the teaching of phonics so that the proportion of pupils reaching the age-related expectations in the Year 1 phonics checks continues to rise.
- Evaluate initiatives designed to promote and accelerate pupils' learning with greater rigour by:
 - including specific targets in the school improvement plan, that relate directly to pupils' achievement, by which the impact of the actions that are taken can be precisely checked.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Most children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are typical for the age. By the end of Year 6, standards in reading, writing and mathematics are above average. Standards in reading and writing are higher than those in mathematics.
- Children settle into the Nursery well. They quickly establish good relationships with the adults and their classmates. They enjoy coming to school and quickly develop a positive attitude to learning.
- Children's skills on entry to the Reception classes are broadly similar to those seen in a typical five year old. The 2013 end-of-year assessments show that the proportion reaching the expected standard in all areas of learning was above average. Current data show that outcomes this year, although not as high, are still above those found nationally in 2013. Children make good progress in their social, physical and creative development and are well prepared for Year 1.
- Pupils' work and school assessment records show that most pupils in Years 1 to 6 are making good progress. Standards in reading and writing are rising rapidly. This is because the school has focussed on improving pupils' reading and writing skills. Books are celebrated and pupils are encouraged to read widely. They are given clear guidance on how to improve the content of their written work. The dip in pupils' attainment at the end of Year 2 in 2013 has been successfully addressed. The standards of pupils currently in Year 2 are on track to be above average in reading and writing and broadly average in mathematics.
- Pupils in Year 2 read well and use their phonic knowledge (the sounds that letters make) appropriately to tackle unfamiliar words. Changes in the way phonics are taught have led to improvements. In 2013 the proportion of pupils reaching the national standard in the Year 1 phonics check was below average. Provisional data indicates that the proportion reaching the expected standard is similar to the national figures for 2013. However, based on their starting point on entry to Year 1, there is scope for further improvement.
- Pupils in Year 6 also read confidently and can explain clearly their reasons for their choice of book. They read with expression and confidence. They know what to do when they are faced with unfamiliar words. Teachers ensure pupils understand the text. They frequently ask pupils about the meaning of words and encourage them to explore the work of different authors.
- Pupils are developing their writing skills well and use language effectively to bring their work to life. They write in different styles, for example poems, play-scripts, newspaper and letters and know how to structure stories and record historical events. Older pupils frequently use similes, metaphors and alliteration to sustain the interest of the reader.
- Although pupils are making accelerated progress in mathematics, their progress is not as rapid as it is in reading and writing. This is because, in younger year groups, the expectations of the more-able pupils are not always high enough. Tasks sometimes lack challenge. Not all pupils in Years 1 and 2 understand and use mathematical terminology confidently. Although most pupils in Year 6 are working at or above the expected level, in other classes not all pupils consistently exceed the levels that are generally expected for their age.
- Pupils entitled to additional support from pupil premium funding are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. In 2013 their standards were about two terms behind their classmates in reading, writing and mathematics. Current data suggest that the gap between the

standards of eligible pupils in reading and writing and the others has narrowed, but in mathematics it is broadly similar to the previous year.

- Good support for pupils who speak English as an additional language, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs helps them make similar progress to their classmates.
- The primary school sports funding is being used appropriately to extend provision and enhance pupils' skills. Sports apprentices have been employed to work along side teachers. Pupils are eager to become involved in the lunch time sporting activities and have a good understanding of how sport contributes to healthy living.

The quality of teaching is good

- Most teaching is consistently good and some is highly effective.
- Teachers' expectations of all pupils are generally good but higher in reading and writing than in mathematics. Given their starting points and known skills, more could reasonably be expected of younger pupils. In other respects, nearly all lessons are well planned.
- All staff strive to ensure that pupils who find learning difficult or who do not speak English fluently have equal access to the same learning opportunities as other pupils. Teaching assistants are deployed effectively to help these pupils and in some classes also support those who are more-able well.
- Teachers in the Early Years Foundation Stage ensure that children are settled, happy and make good progress. Staff regularly check and record the children's development in their detailed learning journeys. They use these records to plan work carefully that consistently meets children's needs in reading and writing but do this less well in mathematics. They ensure the classrooms and outdoor areas are safe. Although the outdoor area is used effectively to promote the children's social and physical skills, its potential to enhance the children's mathematical skills and understanding has not yet been fully realised.
- Teachers manage pupils' behaviour well. Pupils learn to share their ideas confidently with each other and with the adults. This promotes their social skills and their ability to communicate clearly with others. The emphasis teachers place on developing positive relationships between pupils and helping each other, supports their spiritual, moral, social and cultural effectively.
- The marking of pupils' work in their English books is good. Pupils are given clear guidance on what they have to do to improve their work. This helps them to make rapid progress and reach their challenging targets. However, marking in mathematics is not as effective. Much of the marking is minimal. There are few 'next step' comments and, where these are included, they are not always followed up in subsequent marking.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. In lessons the vast majority work with sustained concentration. They want to do well and please their teachers. This is reflected in their good progress.
- Pupils are proud of their school. They show respect for the environment. Displays and equipment are valued. There is no litter. Pupils behave well at all times. They move around the buildings sensibly and play happily together on the playground and the school field. They look

after one-other and are polite in the way they speak to each other and to adults. At times their conduct is exemplary.

- Incidents of inappropriate behaviour or racist incidents are rare. Pupils say that, should such an incident occur, they are confident it will be dealt with fairly and swiftly by the senior leaders. They know about different types of bullying, for example name-calling, fighting, racial bullying, or religious intolerance.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Leaders make sure the building is secure and that staff are checked for their suitability prior to appointment.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. Pupils know who to turn to if they are worried, and are confident they will be listened to. They are aware of potential dangers when using the internet.
- Over the last few years, pupils' attendance has declined slightly. Currently it is average. However, over the last twelve months, the proportion of persistent absentees has decreased. This is because the school has been more robust in its procedure for following up absences.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher sets high expectations both for the quality of education the school provides and for pupils' achievement and behaviour. The headteacher, senior and subject leaders are working well together to improve teaching and ensure that pupils make good progress. They have acted quickly to tackle the dip in the 2013 Year 2 assessments and the Year 1 phonics checks.
- Staff have responded positively to leaders' initiatives. Systems for checking on pupils' progress and teaching quality have been reviewed. Pupils are now making good progress and standards, especially in reading and writing, are rising rapidly. Staff have attended courses and are working together effectively to incorporate the changes required by the revision of the National Curriculum.
- Senior leaders know the school's strengths and have identified the key areas for development. These are set out in their improvement plan. However, the measures used to check the success of any actions taken are not sufficiently precise or linked closely enough to pupils' attainment and progress.
- Subject leaders are developing their roles well. They support senior leaders' initiatives and make a valuable contribution to the development of the school.
- The headteacher regularly undertakes checks on the impact of teaching on pupils' learning. Pupils' attainment and progress data are discussed and teachers are asked to explain if any pupil is falling behind. Additional support is provided if necessary. The information is shared with the governing body and used to decide if the teachers should receive a pay rise.
- Parents are supportive of the school and are generally pleased with their child's progress. They feel they are kept informed and know what their children will be studying. This is because teachers plan the term's work in advance and upload an overview of the areas to be covered onto the school web site. Parents appreciate the way that, whenever possible, subjects are brought together through a theme or topic. This helps their children to see the links between subjects.

- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. Pupils are given many opportunities to enrich their education, for example by working in groups and by taking part in a range of sporting activities and educational visits. Art displays and the celebration of events from different cultures support pupils' cultural development effectively.
- The local authority has provided appropriate support. Leaders make good use of the officers' termly visits to review the school's performance and to help the governing body in setting targets for the headteacher.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors attend courses and are developing their skills and understanding of governance well. They are keen to promote good relationships within the school and the local community and will not accept discrimination of any sort. They oversee the work of the school and ensure the requirements for keeping pupils safe are met. Senior leaders provide governors with a good overview of pupils' performance data and link this to national comparisons. This helps the governors understand where teaching is consistently good and if additional support is needed. They know how targets are set for teachers to improve, and understand the process for rewarding good teaching.
- Governors monitor the budget closely. They are satisfied that money, including the pupil premium allocation and the primary sports funding, is spent as intended. For example, most of the pupil premium money is being spent on resources and additional staffing to support pupils' learning in literacy and numeracy. The sport funding is being used to employ apprentice sports staff, train teachers, to extend the range of sporting activities and to enter various sporting competitions. However, robust systems for checking on the impact of some initiatives have not been put into place.

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	117368
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	439630

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	478
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kath McKerrell
Headteacher	Richard Haynes
Date of previous school inspection	25 March 2009
Telephone number	01442 401222
Fax number	01442 399136
Email address	admin@hobbshillwood.herts.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 and 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

