

St Catherine's Hoddesdon CofE Primary School

Haslewood Avenue, Hoddesdon, EN11 8HT

Inspection dates 15–16 July 2014

| Overall effectiveness | Previous inspection: | Requires improvement | 3 |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|----------|
| | This inspection: | Requires improvement | 3 |
| Achievement of pupils | | Requires improvement | 3 |
| Quality of teaching | | Requires improvement | 3 |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils | | Good | 2 |
| Leadership and management | | Requires improvement | 3 |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement.

- Over time, too few pupils have made good progress across the school, especially in mathematics by Year 6.
- Pupils, especially the most able, are not given hard enough work when they are ready for the next steps in their learning.
- Not enough teaching is good or better. Some teachers do not check pupils' progress well enough in lessons and adapt their teaching accordingly.
- Teachers do not always ensure that pupils follow the advice they are given when they mark their work.
- Teachers do not always check and correct pupils' spelling, punctuation and grammatical mistakes.
- Governors do not have an accurate understanding of the quality of teaching and of how teachers' performance is managed.
- The improvement plans of subject leaders do not give enough attention to the progress of different groups and these leaders do not check effectively on the improvements made.

The school has the following strengths

- The co-headteachers have put the right things in place to raise standards in the school and have the support of their staff. Consequently, this is an improving school.
- Standards rose across the school this year, including in Year 6, and the gap between those eligible for extra funding and the rest has narrowed.
- Pupils are strongly motivated to learn and behave well throughout the school.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted very well. This is having a positive impact on the school community, in which pupils feel safe and valued.
- Children's achievement in the Early Years Foundation Stage has been good this year and pupils have made good progress in Key Stage 1.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 19 sessions of teaching, five of which were observed jointly with school leaders.
- Meetings were held with two groups of pupils, four governors including the Chair of the Governing Body, the local authority School Improvement Partner, and school staff.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents. These included the school's attainment and progress information, planning and monitoring documentation, school improvement plan and self-evaluation summary, the safeguarding policies and behaviour and attendance records.
- Inspectors took account of the 38 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and the 15 responses they received from a staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors talked to pupils about the school's work and listened to some pupils read.

Inspection team

Nasim Butt, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Liz Kissane

Additional Inspector

Rosemarie McCarthy

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a larger than average-sized school.
- The school is led by two co-headteachers. One works four days a week and the other works full time. These co-headteachers both share the roles and responsibilities of headship.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is below average. Most pupils are White British with the next biggest ethnic group coming from other White backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium, additional government funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, is broadly average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs and who need some extra help is below average, as is the proportion who need more help or who have a statement of special educational needs.
- The governing body has management responsibility for the children's centre that shares a site with the school. This is subject to separate inspection arrangements.
- The school did not meet the current government floor standards in 2013, which are the minimum levels expected for pupils' attainment and progress. Indicative data shows that the school has met the floor standards in 2014.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that pupils make good or better progress, particularly in mathematics, by ensuring that:
 - all teachers check regularly on pupils' progress in lessons and adapt their teaching when needed so that more pupils make rapid progress
 - pupils, especially the most-able, have harder work when they are ready to move on in their learning
 - teachers' marking is consistently helpful in moving pupils up to the next level of attainment and ensuring that pupils act upon the comments made
 - teachers develop pupils' literacy skills across all subjects by correcting spelling, punctuation and grammatical mistakes.
- Strengthen the effectiveness of leadership and management in order to secure more rapid improvement by:
 - ensuring that subject improvement plans give greater emphasis to the progress made by all groups of pupils and on leaders checking more effectively on the improvements being made
 - improving governors' knowledge and understanding of the quality of teaching and the management of teachers' performance, which informs decisions about progression up the pay scale.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because over time, not enough pupils have made good progress across the school, particularly in mathematics by the end of Year 6. This includes the most-able pupils, whose progress has not been strong.
- Since the previous inspection, standards in mathematics at Key Stage 2 dipped in 2013 and pupils made inadequate progress, including those eligible for additional government funding and the most able. Indicative results for 2014 show that standards have improved this year and are broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6. However, in relation to pupils' average starting points, this represents reasonable rather than good progress. Too few of the more-able Year 6 pupils are working at above-average levels of skill and understanding in mathematics.
- At the end of Year 6 in 2013, pupils supported by the pupil premium were around six months behind their peers in reading and around a year behind in writing and mathematics. As a result of the improvements this year, including more effective use of one-to-one tuition, the attainment gap has closed significantly throughout the school. In reading, the gap is around three months; in writing and in mathematics, it is around two months. This illustrates the school's increasingly successful commitment to equality of opportunity for all.
- The school's current progress information shows that White British pupils, have made better progress this year compared to the previous year in reading, writing and mathematics. This is also the case for pupils of other White backgrounds. The small minority of pupils from different minority ethnic backgrounds have also made stronger progress this year compared to their performance in the previous year.
- Stronger teaching in Key Stage 1 this year has resulted in most pupils making better progress. They are reaching above average standards in reading and writing and broadly average standards in mathematics by the end of Year 2. However, not enough of the most-able pupils are making good progress.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make reasonable progress because they are well supported in lessons. Very occasionally, however, these pupils do not make enough progress when tasks are not properly adjusted for their specific learning needs.
- Pupils' reading skills are improving across the school because of a concerted effort to plant a love of books in pupils' minds. For example, reading activities in different subjects are an important part of pupils' daily experience. As a result, they read widely and often, and clearly enjoy the experience.
- As a result of improved teaching in Reception, children get off to a good start. Standards have risen to above national expectations and children have achieved well this year. This is an improvement since the previous inspection, when achievement in the Early Years Foundation Stage was judged to require improvement.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Since the previous inspection, teaching has not secured good outcomes for all groups of pupils,

and particularly for mathematics at Key Stage 2.

- Teachers do not always ensure that pupils, especially the most able, have harder work when they are ready to move on in their learning. This slows the progress that these pupils make in lessons.
- Teachers do not always give pupils precise guidance for improvement. Sometimes, teachers do not ensure that pupils follow the advice they are given when they mark their work.
- Sometimes, teachers continue to provide new information to pupils without checking how much pupils have understood. On these occasions, teachers do not adapt their teaching according to what their progress check is telling them.
- Leaders acknowledge that there is a lack of a consistent approach to the marking of literacy across different subjects, resulting in variation in the attention teachers give to correcting pupils' spelling, punctuation and grammatical mistakes.
- Teaching in Reception helps children to develop important communication skills which support them in their learning. Teachers are skilful in capturing children's interests. Consequently, children's progress is good in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Teachers and teaching assistants often use resources well to support the learning of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. This enables these pupils to improve their understanding of important ideas and make reasonable progress.
- Physical education is taught well and is focused on developing key subject skills. As a result, pupils enjoy their learning and make good progress in this subject.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Most parents who responded to the online questionnaire believed behaviour to be good and poor behaviour to be dealt with well. Pupils who spoke to inspectors said that most pupils behave well most of the time.
- Pupils are friendly, polite, helpful and kind to each other and to visitors. Staff are good role models for these pupils and have built strong, caring relationships.
- In most lessons, pupils are engrossed in what they are learning about and this helps many to make progress. Pupils respond quickly to teachers' cues, both verbal and non-verbal, and moving between activities is a seamless process.
- When asked to work in pairs or in groups, pupils cooperate and work well together. Consistently good behaviour has meant that there has been only one fixed-term exclusion in the previous year.
- Most pupils take great pride in how they present their work. Pupils are proud of their school and share the values it promotes.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils, parents and staff all agree that pupils are safe and well looked after.

- Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe on social media sites and when using the internet. They know, for example, not to give out any details about themselves online and to be suspicious about who they are speaking with in case they are not who they say they are.
- Pupils have a good understanding of different types of bullying and the negative consequences. Those who spoke to inspectors said that any form of bullying is rare in the school and is dealt with effectively by staff if it happens. Records of three racist incidents showed that they had been properly followed through by staff.
- School staff know pupils and their families well. They track carefully if anyone is absent, and analyse the attendance rates of pupils supported by the pupil premium. As a result of effective and persistent work with targeted families, persistent absence has gone down and attendance has improved and is now in line with the national average.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Since the previous inspection, standards in mathematics dipped to below average at the end of Key Stage 2 and too many pupils, including the most able, made inadequate progress.
- Although standards have improved in 2014, leaders have not done enough to improve rates of progress for Year 6 pupils, including the most-able. As a result, too many pupils have not made good progress in relation to their starting points.
- Subject leaders' improvement plans do not give enough emphasis to the progress made by all groups of pupils, in particular the most able, and so checks on how much improvement has been made are not as effective as they should be.
- As a result of the clear vision and direction set by the co-headteachers, and effectively implemented, standards are now rising and progress is accelerating across the school, including in the Early Years Foundation Stage, where children's progress is good. The improvements to date do show that the school has the capacity to improve further.
- Information about pupils' attainment and progress is now used more effectively by leaders to identify much earlier which pupils need extra help and support. As a result, pupils helped through short-term programmes of support designed to boost their attainment are making better progress in literacy and mathematics.
- Additional government funding through the pupil premium has been used well this year to improve outcomes for eligible pupils. As a result, the attainment gap between these pupils and their peers has narrowed considerably this year.
- The additional primary sports funding is used effectively; for example, by providing additional capacity to teach a wider range of physical activities at lunch time and after school. This is helping to increase pupils' participation in sport, increase their skills and to improve their health and well-being.
- Pupils enjoy studying a wide range of subjects, including physical education, which is taught well. Reception children also have access to swimming lessons, which they thoroughly enjoy. A wide range of provision in lessons and extra-curricular activities, including sport, music and cultural events, successfully promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

- The local authority has provided useful support to the school. It has helped to improve leaders' skills in evaluating the quality of learning in lessons and provided additional support to improve the teaching of mathematics.

- **The governance of the school:**
 - As a result of effective training, governors are beginning to improve their skills on how to hold the school to account using information about pupils' progress. The governing body has set up a 'data review group' to further sharpen this aspect of its work. However, governors' knowledge and understanding of the quality of teaching is not strong enough. For example, there is an over-reliance on the information leaders provide about the outcomes of lesson observations without checking this against a wider range of evidence. As a result, holding the school to account on the quality of teaching is not sharp enough. Governors do not have an accurate understanding of the management of teachers' performance which informs decisions as to whether or not they progress up the pay scale.
 - Governors have now introduced more rigorous checks on the impact of additional government funding. The school's information shows that gaps in attainment between pupils supported by the pupil premium and their peers, which widened last year, are now closing.
 - Governors make sure that safeguarding arrangements are in place, and that statutory requirements 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

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| Unique reference number | 133773 |
| Local authority | Hertfordshire |
| Inspection number | 442079 |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Voluntary controlled |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 319 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Rod Wiltshire |
| Headteacher | Mandy Staiano and Angela Wallis |
| Date of previous school inspection | 6 February 2013 |
| Telephone number | 01992 463214 |
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