

# High Firs Primary School

Court Crescent, Swanley, BR8 8NR

**Inspection dates** 15–16 July 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
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 in reading, writing and mathematics, often from below average starting points.
- Teaching is typically good. Pupils enjoy their learning and most achieve well. Senior leaders have taken decisive action to bring this about.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress because they receive focused and skilled support.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. Respect and courtesy are hallmarks of this harmonious school community. The school is a happy and safe place in which to learn.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. They have many opportunities to take part in musical and sporting activities.
- The headteacher provides determined leadership. Since the previous inspection, he has shared and developed leadership throughout the school. As a result, teaching and achievement have improved.
- Governors both challenge the headteacher and fully support his vision. They know the school well, including how resources are used and how well pupils are learning.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- Too few boys attain the highest levels of attainment in writing.
- The level of challenge in lessons is sometimes insufficient for the needs of the most able pupils.
- Even though the quality of marking has improved, it still varies. Pupils get too few opportunities to act upon the guidance given by their teachers to improve their work.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed learning in 19 lessons taught by eight teachers. Four lessons were observed jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors also looked closely at pupils’ work with subject leaders.
- Inspectors talked with pupils and listened to some Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 pupils reading.
- Meetings were held with staff, three members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors looked closely at school documentation, including minutes of meetings of the governing body, the school’s analysis of how well it is doing and its improvement plan. They reviewed documents relating to behaviour and safeguarding and the school’s data on pupils’ progress.
- Inspectors took account of the 45 responses from parents and carers recorded in the online questionnaire, Parent View. They also had informal conversations with some parents and carers at the end of the school day.
- The inspectors took account of the 18 responses to the staff questionnaire provided by Ofsted.

## Inspection team

Gianni Bianchi, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Jennifer Cutler

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- High Firs Primary School is smaller than average in size.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium, which is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after is well below the national average.
- Nearly all pupils are White British with very few pupils who speak English as an additional language or come from minority ethnic backgrounds.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The school meets the current floor standards, the government's minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school operates a breakfast club.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and achievement so that both are outstanding by ensuring that:
  - more boys attain the highest levels in writing by giving them highly motivating tasks to complete
  - the most able pupils are given more challenging tasks to meet their needs
  - pupils are routinely given time to act upon the advice given in their teachers' marking so that they fully understand how to improve their work.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils make good progress from starting points which are often below those expected for their age. The proportions of pupils who attain the expected levels in reading, writing and mathematics at ages seven and 11 are in line with national averages. Many pupils reach the highest levels in reading and mathematics.
- Daily phonics (the sounds that letters make) is taught well and pupils reach the standards expected of them in the Year 1 phonics screening check. Pupils who read to the inspectors demonstrated fluent and expressive reading and good understanding.
- From Reception to Year 6, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress. This is because their needs are identified early and the right support is provided.
- In the 2013 end of Year 6 tests, the gap in attainment between pupils supported by the additional funding and other pupils in the school was successfully closed in mathematics and writing, and significantly narrowed in reading to two terms behind the others. Compared to their classmates, they made similarly good progress from their different starting points.
- The level of presentation in pupils' workbooks shows that pupils take pride in their achievements.
- The typically good achievement of pupils means that pupils are well prepared for secondary education. This includes the small number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and pupils whose first language is not English.
- In mathematics, the progress made by the most able pupils over time has improved rapidly. This is due to effective action taken by school leaders since the previous inspection. For example, leaders have given mathematics more of a focus throughout the school. However, the most able pupils are not always challenged enough in other subjects.
- The school has reliable systems for checking how well pupils are doing and it is clear from these records that their achievement has improved. However, in writing, the proportion of boys who attain the higher levels at age 11 is lower than the proportion of girls. This is because some boys are not as highly motivated by the tasks they are given to write about. This is why achievement is not outstanding.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Good teaching is leading to rising achievement in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teachers mainly make good use of information on pupils' progress to plan activities that are set at the right level. This includes planning for the work of teaching assistants, whose focused support and skilful questioning make a positive difference to pupils' learning.
- Where pupils make best progress, teachers use a variety of effective approaches to check and develop pupils' understanding. For example, in a Year 6 mathematics lesson, the teacher quickly picked up and tackled pupils' confusion about working out Pythagoras' Theorem. This allowed pupils successfully to get on with the next task and make good progress.
- The quality of displays and good relationships between adults and pupils create a purposeful atmosphere for learning.
- Good teaching enables children in Reception class to make rapid progress. The school's own records show that this is improving year on year, so that pupils are increasingly ready for the challenges and opportunities of Year 1 and beyond.
- Work in pupils' books is of a high standard. Pupils have opportunities to apply their writing skills in the topics they study. Teachers have high expectations of learning, particularly in reading and mathematics, and encourage pupils to achieve the very best they can. Sometimes, the most able pupils are not challenged enough, especially when writing.
- Teachers mark work regularly and consistently in line with the school's policy. Pupils know and understand what the symbols used mean. However, teachers give pupils too few opportunities in

lessons to act upon this advice so that they fully understand how to improve their work.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They are courteous and polite around the school, and helpful to visitors. Pupils play well together and support one another.
- Older pupils enjoy a range of responsibilities and school councillors are proud to have this role.
- Pupils show respect for their school and use equipment and books with care. Everyone wears their school uniform with pride.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. This includes the close supervision of pupils at all times and detailed policies and records concerning behaviour, which staff follow consistently.
- Pupils are taught about the dangers of bullying and are aware of its different forms. They know how to use the internet safely. They are confident that if problems arise and they tell an adult, the issue will be dealt with firmly.
- Pupils' attendance is above average. This reflects pupils' enjoyment of school. The school's successful breakfast club provides pupils with a positive start to the school day.
- Senior leaders work hard to engage parents and carers in the school's work to improve behaviour and eradicate any form of bullying. Most parents and carers expressed through Parent View, and to inspectors, that they are positive about the school's approach to bullying and managing behaviour. Despite the concerns of a few parents and carers, inspectors found that the school has achieved a harmonious and cohesive community where pupils are safe, and where firm action is taken promptly if issues arise.
- Most pupils show good behaviour when learning. However, when tasks are not challenging enough, some pupils, especially the most able, find it difficult to maintain their concentration. As a result, progress slows and this is why behaviour is not yet outstanding.

### **The leadership and management** are good

- The headteacher and governors have high aspirations and are committed to providing the best education possible for the pupils. Since the previous inspection the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement have improved. This shows their capacity to bring about further improvements.
- School leaders make regular checks on the quality of teaching focusing on how well it enables pupils to learn. They give teachers clear feedback so that they know how to improve. Subject leaders are actively involved in improving the quality of teaching in their areas of responsibility and lead training for other staff where it is needed.
- The school's view of its own strengths and areas for development is accurate. Equality of opportunity is promoted well.
- The additional funding is spent effectively on the employment of extra teachers and pastoral support. An increased drive to meet the needs of pupils eligible for support from the funding means that teaching is more sharply matched to their needs. As a result, their progress is accelerating and they make good progress.
- The range of subjects that pupils learn and the many opportunities to take part in musical and sporting activities are a strength of the school. This is enriched with trips to museums and a residential trip to the Isle of Wight. The school is very proud to have won the inter-schools athletics competition this year.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well through effective teaching in religious education, history and geography. Pupils have a strong appreciation of the difference between right and wrong and discrimination in any form is not tolerated.
- The sports funding is used primarily to employ a sports teacher who promotes active engagement in physical education and assists in staff training. Pupils' participation in physical activity is increasing and leaders are beginning to see an improvement in the self-esteem of

some pupils who would otherwise find it difficult to join in.

- The school has appreciated the extensive support of the local authority to bring about improvements in standards. Teachers work closely with other local schools to share expertise.
- The school ensures that all statutory safeguarding requirements are met.
- Most parents and carers were of the opinion that the school is well led and managed and that their children achieve well.
- The school recognises there is still work to do to ensure that more boys attain the highest levels in writing. This is why leadership and management are not outstanding.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body is knowledgeable about the school's performance and highly committed to and passionate about improving it. It has an accurate view of the quality of teaching, and clear targets for staff closely link pay with performance. Recently, the governing body has significantly increased the rigour of its systems. Governors both support and challenge school leaders in their shared drive to improve standards. They combine their own analysis of how well pupils are doing with information gathered during regular formal visits to the school. Governors play a key role in determining the strategic direction of the school. Acutely aware of the need for careful financial management, they remain focused on the needs of pupils and the quality of education when making decisions, including about the use of additional 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	118541
<b>Local authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	442465

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	206
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Tony Phipps
<b>Headteacher</b>	Colin Turtle
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	19–20 September 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	01322 669721
<b>Fax number</b>	01322 615997
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