

Hale School

Upper Hale, Farnham, GU9 0LR

Inspection dates 20–21 May 2015

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Not enough pupils make accelerated progress because there is not enough consistently good teaching. Standards are not rising fast enough.
- Not all teachers have sufficiently high expectations of what pupils can achieve. They do not always provide lesson activities that sufficiently challenge the full range of pupils at an appropriate level.
- Teachers do not always have high enough expectations or provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to improve the quality of their writing skills across a wide range of subjects.
- The majority of teachers do not implement the school's marking policy consistently.
- There is a significant group of pupils who are persistently absent from school.
- Subjects other than literacy and numeracy have not been given sufficient time and are not covered in enough depth.

The school has the following strengths

- The early years provision is good and has improved significantly. Nursery provision is outstanding. Children now make good progress because activities are stimulating and well taught.
- The teaching of phonics (the linking of sounds and letters) has improved significantly so pupils' knowledge of phonics is improving rapidly.
- The focus of senior leaders on improving teaching in the current year has already brought about some improvements.
- Standards at the end of Year 2 improved in 2014.
- School leaders have successfully addressed concerns about pupils' behaviour. Pupils now show positive attitudes to learning, feel very safe and behave well.
- Underperformance by disadvantaged pupils has been robustly tackled by senior leaders. Progress has improved significantly, so that the gaps between their attainment and that of their peers, both in school and nationally, are closing.
- Senior leadership is now a significant strength. The new leadership team has already achieved a great deal and parents recognise the many improvements. The monitoring and improvement of teaching have had a positive impact.
- Governance is a strength. Governors are ambitious for the school. They are well informed about the quality of teaching and now make a significant contribution to driving improvement.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 19 lessons, four of which were seen jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors looked closely at pupils' written work for the current school year. They listened to some pupils read.
- Meetings were held with a group of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and two other governors, two representatives from the local authority and the school's senior and subject leaders.
- Inspectors took account of the 49 responses to the staff questionnaire and the 134 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. In addition, several letters and other messages were received from parents.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of school documents, including plans for improvement and records of checks on the quality of teaching. They also considered records of governing body meetings and those relating to behaviour, attendance, safeguarding and the systems used to check pupils' progress.

Inspection team

George Logan, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Joanna Brinkley	Additional Inspector
Sean McKeown	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Hale School is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is in line with the national average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium is slightly above the national average. This is additional government funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals or who are looked after.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- In the early years, Nursery children attend either a morning or afternoon session each day, while Reception children all attend full time.
- The headteacher joined the school in September 2014. The deputy headteacher joined in April 2014.
- There is a Children's Centre on site. While this is managed by the governing body of the school, it is inspected separately.
- The school offers breakfast and after-school care clubs. These are managed by the governing body and formed part of the current inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve teaching and enable pupils to make faster progress in all subjects across the school so that standards are raised further by the end of Year 6, by ensuring:
 - teachers have consistently high expectations of what pupils can achieve and provide activities that challenge all pupils
 - tasks are set at the right level of difficulty, based upon an accurate view of their existing skills
 - teachers have higher expectations and provide more opportunities for pupils to improve the quality of their writing skills across a wide range of subjects
 - all teachers follow the school's marking policy so that pupils have a clear understanding of what they need to do to improve their work.
- Take action to improve significantly the attendance of the substantial group of pupils with a track record of persistent absence.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- With the arrival of the new headteacher, the school has experienced a period of rapid and positive change. The vision and commitment of current leaders have already produced significant improvements in early years leadership and outcomes, and in the teaching of phonics. Fundamental concerns, shared by parents, about pupils' behaviour, have been tackled robustly so that behaviour is now good. Safeguarding has been comprehensively reviewed and improved so that current statutory safeguarding requirements are now fully met. There has been considerable input to improving the skills of the teaching staff and raising their expectations of what pupils can achieve. Consequently, while there is a recognition that there is work still to be done to improve the impact of teaching and boost pupils' achievement further, and this will take more time, the school is now in a strong position to move forward rapidly. This is why leadership and management are not outstanding.
- Senior leaders promote positive attitudes and strong values. The senior leadership team has been restructured and strengthened considerably with the recently appointed deputy headteacher and a new, effective inclusion manager contributing significantly to its increased capacity. Together, current leaders are effectively promoting a culture where teaching ensures pupils achieve increasingly well and behaviour is now good.
- Key subject leaders are well informed and have an accurate overview of the strengths and weaknesses of their subjects. They have produced rigorous monitoring plans to raise achievement and improve the quality of teaching. Good opportunities for training by working alongside experienced senior leaders and observing best practice in other schools have contributed positively to developing their leadership skills and impact.
- School leaders have high expectations of all staff and this is contributing significantly to the improvements which are now beginning to emerge. The leadership and monitoring of teaching are effective. Consequently, staff expectations are rising, although there is more to do to embed a culture of consistently high expectations across all aspects of the school's work. Procedures for setting targets to improve teachers' practice are now securely established and are having an impact.
- Senior leaders quickly identified weaknesses in the breadth and quality of the existing curriculum and the depth to which subjects other than literacy and numeracy were studied. They have rapidly addressed this weakness and are currently implementing a completely new curriculum. This will cover all expected subjects in appropriate depth and is aligned fully to the new National Curriculum. Currently, coverage in subjects other than English and mathematics, as reflected in pupils' books, is sometimes limited. There have been too few opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills through work in other subjects.
- The school has trialled a new system which provides a manageable approach to evaluating pupils' progress. School leaders are on track to implement this by September 2015, but it is too early to judge the full impact of this initiative.
- School leaders review the impact of pupil premium expenditure rigorously. Following significant modifications to the inherited plan, they can demonstrate that eligible pupils are now making much more rapid progress than previously. Expenditure on additional teaching has been targeted more effectively, with much greater impact in the current year.
- The school's evaluation of its effectiveness is accurate. School leaders are clear as to the impact of the improvements already made and about where further improvement is needed.
- The primary sports funding is used well to provide specialist sports coaching. Until recently, staff training had not been given a high priority. This weakness has been addressed for the new school year. The school has a higher level of participation in after-school sports clubs, and competitive sport, than previously.
- The local authority has provided good support to improve teaching and boost achievement, including additional training and support for teaching through a link with a local teaching school.
- The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The school promotes British values effectively through, for example, mock elections to raise pupils' awareness of the recent general election. More work has been done to raise pupils' awareness of the rights and expectations of other religious and faith groups nationally. Consequently, pupils recognise their rights and responsibilities as British citizens and are increasingly well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The school works hard to ensure equality of opportunity for all. Discrimination in any form is not tolerated.
- School leaders have worked hard to improve links with parents. Parental satisfaction has increased considerably, as parents have noted the many positive changes. Strong links have been brokered with other schools to strengthen staff training opportunities and to ensure smooth transition as pupils move

between schools.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governance is a strength of the school. Governors are ambitious and bring a range of relevant expertise and skills to their work. They undertake their role with professionalism and a commitment to do the best for their community. They have commissioned a review of their effectiveness and acted upon the findings. They recognise that raising achievement continues to be a priority, but have confidence in the current leadership team. They undertake regular training to improve their skills further. Governors have, in the last year, gained much greater access to information about the school's performance. As a result, they are well informed about the school's work and are closely involved in school improvement. They are holding school leaders to account with increasing rigour.
- Governors have a thorough grasp of data. They have a good understanding of the performance of all groups of pupils. They know how the school is doing in relation to schools nationally and can evaluate the effectiveness of teaching. The management of teachers' performance is now more effective, although there is more to do to accelerate pupils' learning further. Pay increases are, overall, securely linked to the outcomes of this process. Governors support school leaders in tackling any underperformance.
- The governing body ensures, alongside senior leaders, that all statutory duties are met, including those for keeping pupils safe.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils behave in an orderly and respectful way around the school. They treat each other with courtesy and show tolerance to one another. They show positive attitudes to learning and are committed and engaged in most lessons. Their written work in literacy and numeracy indicates that they mostly work hard and are keen to do their best.
- Earlier in the year, parents had concerns about pupils' behaviour. The newly appointed headteacher had also quickly identified significant issues in the management of pupils' behaviour. These were associated, in part, with inherited shortcomings in the school's provision to meet the needs of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. The negotiation of a shared commitment to the school's 'values', the implementation of rigorous systems for the managing and monitoring of pupils' behaviour and a whole-school drive to ensure that pupils' individual needs are met have together produced significant improvements.
- Pupils' behaviour is now managed well, with clear and effective systems in place. Incidents have reduced significantly, with relatively few recent exclusions. Incidents of racist behaviour are rare. Pupils say that the school is now a better place because behaviour has improved. Consequently, they find it more enjoyable to be in school.
- Attendance is broadly average. However, analysis of the school's attendance figures indicates that there is a higher than expected level of persistent absence for a significant minority of pupils. Behaviour is not outstanding because, although there are extensive systems in place to tackle poor attendance, these have not yet secured sufficient impact.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. With the school's much more rigorous approach to managing behaviour, pupils feel safe and are now confident that staff will deal with issues rapidly.
- The headteacher commissioned a whole-school safeguarding and health and safety review shortly after she arrived. The extensive recommendations in the subsequent report have been rigorously addressed and procedures tightened in almost all respects. A few non-critical recommendations relating to grounds and premises will be tackled as opportunity allows and finance permits. All staff undergo full safeguarding checks prior to appointment.
- The school helps pupils to protect themselves from a range of risks, including road safety hazards. Pupils are aware of the risks relating to cyber-bullying, grooming, internet abuse and inappropriate usage.
- Pupils know that bullying may take many different forms. They feel that the potential risk of bullying has lessened considerably in the current year. They know what action to take if they have concerns.
- Pastoral care is a strength of the school. Case studies indicate that the school makes every effort, alongside external agencies, to ensure that vulnerable pupils are supported appropriately.
- The school makes good provision in the breakfast and after-school care clubs for pupils who arrive early at school or who need to stay late.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because it has not been sufficiently good over time to enable pupils to make consistently good progress.
- Teachers do not always have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve, or provide enough challenge. Not all teachers are sufficiently alert to the extent of pupils' learning, so that they are slow to modify tasks and increase the level of challenge. There is a lack of urgency in some lessons.
- While there is some higher-quality written work, particularly in literacy and numeracy, pupils' written work is not always produced to a high standard. Across the school, there are pockets of lower expectations.
- The school has established effective systems to check pupils' progress and provide necessary additional support. However, while pupils' work, particularly in writing, is marked thoroughly in some classes, this is not the case in others. Not all teachers provide clear enough advice for pupils about how to improve their work further and they do not always make sure that pupils follow up this advice.
- Despite some remaining weaknesses, the pace of learning has begun to improve and the proportion of good or better teaching has shown a steady upward trend during the year. Consequently, pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics is beginning to speed up. This is most evident, at this point, in early years, where effective teaching, including the teaching of phonics, is laying a crucial foundation so that older pupils can make faster progress.
- With more effective leadership, the support for disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and disadvantaged pupils has improved, so that these pupils are now making better progress, similar to their classmates. Learning support staff are mostly well deployed and support learning increasingly well.
- Pupils learn well when the work is both interesting and challenging. Pupils in a Year 6 mathematics lesson were developing their understanding of how to apply mathematical operations in the correct sequence. The main tasks, although textbook-based problems, provided good levels of challenge for each group. These engaged pupils well and they were able to sustain their interest and efforts for an extended period. In consequence, the pace of learning was good.
- Homework has improved and now contributes more effectively to pupils' learning. Teachers set tasks and respond to them regularly.

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Over time, pupils have typically made expected progress at Key Stage 2, reaching average standards by the end of Year 6. Typically, stronger teaching in Year 6 has compensated for more variable rates of progress in earlier years, so that pupils' progress over time is uneven. This continues to be broadly the case. Pupils' work and evidence of pupils' learning in lessons confirms that there is still significant variability in teachers' expectations and the impact of their work across the school. Consequently, achievement requires improvement because it is not yet sufficiently sustained or consistently good, particularly in Years 3 and 4.
- Prior to the current year, the needs of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs were not accurately identified. As a result, these pupils were not adequately supported, leading to underperformance. While there have been significant improvements in the quality and effectiveness of the support provided, with a positive impact on learning, the school recognises that there is further work to do to ensure that their progress is consistently good.
- Achievement, particularly in early reading, writing and mathematical skills, has improved rapidly in the early years. Until 2013, most cohorts entered Year 1 with below average skills and knowledge. Outcomes are on track to be significantly above average in 2015. This represents good achievement from their starting points.
- Pupils have typically made expected progress in Years 1 and 2, reaching, in most years, average standards by the end of Year 2. Following a dip in 2013, attainment recovered in 2014 and was slightly above average. Attainment in 2015 is likely to be a little lower, although still broadly average. Overall progress is likely to be close to what is expected.
- Until recently, the teaching of phonics has lacked structure. Consequently, the proportion of pupils reaching the nationally expected level in the Year 1 phonics screening check up to 2014 was below the national average. The introduction, in January 2015, of a structured scheme has increased the rate of progress in Year 1. The proportion reaching the expected level in 2015 is likely to rise. The extension of the scheme to early years, for which training is ongoing, is intended to secure more rapid learning at an earlier age. Pupils across the school have mostly well-established skills in reading.

- The attainment of Year 6 pupils in 2014 was broadly average overall. Progress in mathematics was the weakest element. While the proportion of pupils making and exceeding the expected progress in 2014 was in line with the national average in reading and writing, it was below the national average in mathematics on both measures.
- Pupils' written work suggests that current progress is best from Year 5 onwards. While there are some strengths currently in writing, there is limited evidence of writing in a wide range of subjects. Current Year 6 pupils are on track to reach broadly average standards, having made mostly expected, but not consistently good, progress.
- The most-able pupils have typically achieved well. Able pupils in Year 6 in 2014 attained more highly and made more rapid progress than similar pupils nationally. While the level of challenge in some lessons currently is variable, the school actively supports able Year 6 pupils who are attempting the challenging Level 6 tests.
- In 2014 national tests, the gap in attainment between disadvantaged Year 6 pupils and others in the school was around four and a half terms in reading and writing, and four terms in mathematics. They were three terms behind other pupils nationally in mathematics and writing, and four terms in reading. In 2014, they made much less rapid progress than other pupils nationally. School data show that, following significant changes to the deployment of support staff, most disadvantaged pupils are currently making at least as rapid progress as the others. Consequently, the gaps in attainment have narrowed considerably in Year 6 and are, on current data, negligible.

The early years provision

is good

- Recent changes in leadership, together with effective external support, have together ensured that the quality of early years practice has improved significantly since the last inspection.
- Around half the children entering Nursery have skill levels below those typical for their age. They make very rapid progress in Nursery because of the outstanding provision. Most children are now learning at the expected level when they enter Reception. Children's learning is tracked and analysed in great detail to ensure that they make the most rapid progress possible. The richly-resourced Nursery environment, with its extensive outdoor area, is a constant source of stimulation for the youngest children. In addition, a high level of engagement with articulate adults ensures that they make the best possible progress in developing their key basic skills, including their personal and social skills.
- The majority of children who attend Nursery subsequently enter the Reception classes. Provision to support children's learning in the Reception classes is consistently good, although at times, there is not enough focus on the needs of the most-able children. They do not always have the opportunity to move on rapidly to more advanced work. Staff interactions are effective and learning is moved on skilfully through effective questioning by adults and productive opportunities for creative play. More effective teaching of phonics, aligned to the new whole-school policy, ensures that children are now acquiring a secure knowledge of sounds and letters, leading to more rapid progress in reading.
- Children, including those who have special educational needs, now achieve well, particularly in the Nursery, because of consistently good teaching. They are well prepared for entry to Year 1. The proportion of children reaching levels typical for their age, although far below the national average in 2013, is on track to be well above in the current year.
- The balance between activities directly led by adults, in reading, writing and mathematics, and opportunities for children to choose from a wide range of other activities, is good. Children have excellent opportunities to access outdoor learning. The campfire and the mud kitchen in the Nursery are particularly popular features, especially with boys. These opportunities further extend children's growing knowledge of the world.
- Children behave well, showing high levels of independence, positive attitudes to learning and a willingness to sustain attention for a lengthy period.
- Children are safe and well looked after. The school works exceptionally well with parents, both prior to their children joining the school and once their children are in school.
- Staff undertake detailed checks and observations and maintain detailed records of children's progress.
- Effective leadership and management, high expectations for all children, and a firm belief in learning through child-led play have contributed to significant improvements in the provision. Recent training has ensured that assessment is now more thorough and accurate.

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	125133
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	462374

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	403
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Richard Peppin
Headteacher	Serena Hemmings
Date of previous school inspection	5 June 2013
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