

Horndon-on-the-Hill CofE Primary School

Hillcrest Road, Horndon-on-the-Hill, Stanford-le-Hope, SS17 8LR

Inspection dates 1–2 July 2015

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher, other senior leaders and governors have a clear vision for the school and provide it with strong leadership.
- The improvements they have made to the quality of teaching have brought about a rise in attainment in reading, writing and mathematics in both key stages and helped pupils to make good progress in all three subjects.
- Teaching is good throughout the school. Teachers and teaching assistants use their good questioning skills to encourage pupils to work problems out for themselves.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress. The gaps in attainment between these pupils and their classmates have narrowed in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress because teachers quickly identify their needs and provide them with good support.
- Leadership and teaching in the early years are very effective.
- Pupils are well behaved at all times and listen carefully to adults. They show respect for each other and those around them.
- Attendance has improved since the last inspection. It is now average and rising as a result of the rigorous efforts made by all staff and because pupils enjoy coming to school.
- The school uses its good links with the local church and the community to promote pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural education very effectively.
- The school ensures pupils are kept safe at all times.
- Governors are highly ambitious for the school and work well as a team with the headteacher and staff. They are well informed about the school's work and have a clear understanding of their role in school improvement.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Marking is not yet consistently good across the school. In some classes, teachers do not give pupils clear guidance on how to improve their work and ensure that they act on it in their subsequent learning.
- Sometimes a few pupils, including the most able, lose concentration and their progress falters when the tasks set for them are not sufficiently interesting or demanding.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed learning in 11 lessons, some of which were seen jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspectors met with pupils, senior leaders, subject leaders, the early years leader, the special educational needs coordinator, four members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors looked at samples of pupils' work, especially from Year 6 who were not present in school, and listened to pupils read.
- The inspector took account of the views of 71 parents who completed the online questionnaire, Parent View, and also spoke with a number of parents in the playground. The inspector also took account of the responses to a questionnaire from 21 staff.
- The inspector looked at a wide range of school documentation, including safeguarding policies, records and training; the school's evaluation of its own work; minutes of meetings of the governing body; attendance figures; and information about pupils' and children's progress across the school, including in the early years.

Inspection team

Gillian Bosschaert, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Matthew Brown

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Horndon-on-the-Hill is a smaller than average primary school.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is well below average. The pupil premium is extra funding provided to help looked after children or pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below average.
- Year 6 pupils were not present during the inspection because they were visiting the secondary schools they would join in September.
- Children enter the Reception class on a full-time basis from the beginning of the academic year in which they are aged five. The new intake of next year's Reception children was in school during the inspection.
- The school works in an informal partnership with two other Church of England primary schools in the area.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment by the end of Year 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching by ensuring that all teachers:
 - set tasks for pupils that are always interesting and challenge all pupils appropriately , including the most able, so that they make the best possible progress in all lessons
 - routinely give pupils clear guidance on how to improve their work and ensure that they act on it in their subsequent learning.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, other senior leaders and governors are united in their vision to improve the school. Their continual drive and clear high expectations have resulted in good behaviour, improved standards and better quality of teaching.
- Leaders' evaluations of the school's effectiveness are accurate. They make sure all staff and governors are aware of the school's priorities and know how these link to their personal and professional needs and to the school's development programme. They have drawn up detailed and costed action plans for staff and governors which closely link to the budget and identify appropriate training needs.
- Senior leaders and subject leaders check teaching regularly by observing colleagues and giving them individual feedback on how to improve their work. Some senior leaders coach teachers directly by teaching alongside them or by demonstrating good practice in lessons of their own. The school works closely with two other schools in the area to share good practice, to monitor pupils' work, to check the accuracy of teachers' assessments and to share training. This has brought about significant improvements in teaching since the previous inspection.
- Subject leaders work effectively in their areas of responsibility. They hold regular staff meetings to develop their own and other teachers' subject expertise, and to build teachers' understanding of the recent changes to the National Curriculum. They keep a sharp eye on the profile of achievement in their subjects through the pupil progress meetings that take place each half term. Each pupil's achievement is tracked very carefully to ensure that no one falls behind. Leaders put support quickly into place to help pupils at risk of underachievement.
- The recently appointed special educational needs coordinator has quickly established good links with outside agencies, including a local special school, to help individual pupils and provide additional guidance for teachers in the classroom. This has successfully raised awareness of the needs of individual disabled pupils and ensured that they make good progress.
- Leaders systematically identify the school's most-able pupils and provide helpful training for staff and teaching assistants in how to meet their needs. This has resulted in more children reaching the higher levels in the assessments at the end of each key stage. The school recognises, however, that there is scope for the most-able pupils to achieve even more.
- The school uses the pupil premium funding effectively to improve the achievement of eligible pupils. The school has devised a series of well-targeted and successful programmes, taken by trained staff, to provide these pupils with good support throughout the school. The attainment and progress of these pupils are carefully checked each half term to ensure that these additional programmes of work are producing favourable results. Consequently, these pupils achieve as well as, and sometimes better than, their classmates. They are given the same good opportunities to succeed as all other groups of pupils.
- Pupils enjoy their learning because teachers ensure it is varied and interesting. Lessons are enhanced by well-chosen additional activities that ensure that pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural education is a real strength of the school. Pupils study local history and the links with the local church and recently entered a poetry competition relating to Magna Carta, in which they took first and second place. Many pupils learn to play a musical instrument and their singing is very good. They regularly take part in choir competitions, one of which they recently won.
- Pupils are aware that some of their classmates come from very different backgrounds to their own, and the school encourages them to make these groups feel welcome. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated. The school ensures all pupils understand key British institutions and concepts, such as democracy and the need to obey the law. For example, during the recent parliamentary elections, pupils were given the real manifestos for the major political parties and had to canvas for votes. The school's approach prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain.

- The school has established very close links with the local secondary school. For example, some secondary pupils attend writing workshops provided by the primary school. Secondary students visit to listen to pupils reading and some of the school's most-able pupils visit the secondary school for lessons. These links have enabled teachers to learn from one another and have also helped pupils to make a smooth start to their secondary education.
- The primary physical education and sport premium is used effectively to promote better health and well-being for pupils. The school has a good link with Thurrock sports partnership. Specialist coaches provide training for pupils and staff in a wide variety of sports, with the result that the school won track, field and overall events in the district sports against some much larger schools.
- Safeguarding procedures are effective and meet requirements. School logs show that the staff make all necessary checks to keep pupils and staff safe. The Fire Brigade also make regular checks on the school's fire safety and all visitors are checked when entering the site.
- The local authority has supported the school well. The teaching and learning team from the local authority has provided good whole-school training for all staff, including in the early years, as well as offering support for individual teachers. This has increased the school's capacity to sustain the improvements that have already been made and to improve further.
- Parents are welcomed into the school. They are able to see the school at work twice a year when they have the opportunity to visit their child's classroom during the daytime when pupils are being taught. During the inspection, parents of the new intake for the Reception class next September were able to eat a school lunch with their children. There is a 'Parent Voice' committee, in which parents from each class are elected to represent all the classes. The large majority of parents feel the school is well managed and led.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are rightly ambitious for the school and have worked effectively to ensure it has improved since the last inspection. They recently reviewed and reconstituted the governing body, undertook an audit of skills and redistributed the responsibilities of each governor. They regularly identify individual governors with appropriate skills to support specific areas of school development. For example, a member of the building and construction trade oversees the premises. The school's safeguarding arrangements, which governors regularly check to ensure they fully meet requirements, are overseen by a police officer. A governor is assigned to monitor the support for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, the most-able pupils and those eligible for pupil premium funding. Governors know how well the school is performing in relation to other schools because governors with an educational background and experience review the data carefully and use it to support and challenge the work of the school. Governors have recently undertaken training in the school's systems for tracking pupil's progress to ensure they are fully up-to-date with what is happening in the school.
 - Governors ensure that new governors are 'buddied' with an existing governor and that relevant training is provided so that they can fulfil their roles effectively. They have drawn up an action plan for self-review and agreed actions to make them more effective, which the local authority has promoted as an example of good practice to other local schools and a neighbouring local authority. Governors visit classes, listen to the opinion of pupils, parents and teachers. They ensure that all funding, including the additional funding allocated by government, is used wisely, and monitor the effectiveness and the impact this is having in helping to raise standards.
 - Governors are fully aware of the performance of the teaching staff and ensure that all decisions about teachers' pay increases properly reflect their performance. They seek the local authority's assistance when setting objectives for the headteacher.

The behaviour and safety of pupils is good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils behave well when moving around the school, to assembly or other lessons, in the playground and the lunch hall. They are attentive during lessons, take their responsibilities seriously and respond well to adults' instructions.

- Pupils have a clear understanding of the difference between right and wrong. This is because leaders place a strong emphasis on the five key values that form the basis of all the school's work (respect, responsibility, honesty, courage and thoughtfulness) and pupils respond very positively to the lead they are given.
- Pupils show respect for adults and their relationships with each other and adults are good. Pupils are taught to care both for each other and for their environment. One class has raised chickens from eggs in an incubator and a gardening club regularly plants flowers around the school.
- Pupils in Year 5 become 'buddies' to the new intake of pupils in the Reception class. They appreciate the opportunity to talk with and read stories to try to get to know the younger ones. Photographs are taken and presented to the young children to keep. On the first day of the new term in September, the older pupils are ready at the gate to greet the new children, giving them a familiar face on which to focus and a friend in the playground until they are settled.
- Most parents who responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and those inspectors spoke with in the playground, feel that behaviour is good. The school's behaviour log is thorough; incidents are meticulously recorded and any actions noted and reported regularly to governors.
- Instances of inappropriate behaviour are rare. Pupils and parents confirm that, should an incident occur, it is always handled effectively by senior staff. Sometimes when tasks set for pupils are not sufficiently interesting, a few pupils lose their concentration and their progress falters slightly.
- Pupils are proud of their school. They take care with the presentation of their work and strive to improve their handwriting. Books are kept clean and neat.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. All visitors are carefully checked in and out of the school. Leaders ensure relevant in-depth checks are made on all staff and maintain careful logs and rigorous risk assessments for the premises and for educational trips off-site.
- Pupils are fully aware of how to keep themselves safe on the roads and on the internet. Pupils have attended a police seminar about cyber bullying called 'Walk the line'. This was pitched at an appropriate level for the different age groups attending so that all the pupils were able to discuss the content of the presentation. Pupils are very clear about what they should do if bullying occurs. To ensure that pupils have an accurate understanding of what constitutes bullying, leaders have displayed eye-catching posters around the school that help pupils distinguish this from simple thoughtlessness or misunderstanding.
- Safeguarding arrangements are secure. The school completes all relevant checks on staff. The majority of parents who responded to the online questionnaire or who spoke to inspectors, believe that their children are kept safe in school, as do pupils themselves. In the view of inspectors, the concerns about safety that were raised by a very small minority of parents are unrepresentative of the views of the great majority, and are unfounded.
- Attendance has improved and is broadly in line with other schools nationally. This is due to the consistent approach taken by staff, who carefully check the reasons given for any absence from school.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection because of to the commitment of senior leaders and governors to commissioning high-quality training for staff. The local authority has also supported the school effectively, with the result that the quality of teaching has improved and is now good throughout the school.
- Teaching assistants have received training and are now trained well; they contribute successfully to pupils'

learning. Teachers and teaching assistants use their questioning skills effectively to encourage pupils to think carefully and extend their learning. Teaching assistants complement the work of the teachers effectively.

- Reading and writing have been a focus of the school and are now strengths. Teachers have developed a more efficient and effective approach to the teaching of guided reading. They plan reading sessions carefully to ensure consistency in teaching across the school. Teachers develop older pupils' comprehension skills and their understanding of inference well. The school has purchased many new resources to help promote good spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- The school has improved its approach to the teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make) and has trained all adults to be clear and accurate in their use of sounds. Teachers reinforce pupils' writing skills in a range of subjects, which has helped raise the quality of pupils' written work.
- Mathematics is taught well and pupils are given good opportunities to use their skills to solve practical problems. Pupil's books show they are making good progress in this aspect of mathematics in all classes.
- Teachers ensure that disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are well supported, both within the classroom and on an individual basis. This helps them to make good progress.
- In some classes, marking is good. Pupils know what they need to do to improve their work and, supported by their teacher, they confidently decide for themselves what they need to do to get better. However, the quality of guidance pupils receive is not consistently good across the school. Pupils are not always encouraged to go over their work to correct mistakes that have been highlighted by the teacher and they are not always given advice on how to improve their work.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Attainment has steadily risen in the last two years throughout the school and is now above average by the end of Year 6. Children enter the school with attainment that is broadly typical for their age. In 2014, more children in the early years achieved a good level of development than was the case at the time of the previous inspection, with many children exceeding the levels expected for their age.
- In 2014, pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 was broadly in line with national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. This was an improvement on the 2013 results, where the most-able pupils were significantly below pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. The school's own records and inspection evidence indicate that this year's results are on track to be higher than in 2014.
- Results in the national phonics screening check in Year 1 dipped in 2014 but have risen this year and are now above the current average. This is because the school has adopted a systematic approach to the teaching of phonics and invested in additional training for teachers and teaching assistants.
- In 2013 and 2014, pupils reached standards at the end of Key Stage 2 that were broadly in line with pupils nationally in reading and mathematics. Results in writing, grammar, punctuation and spelling in 2014 were above average, with many pupils reaching the higher levels of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics.
- In 2014, all pupils made the progress expected of them in reading and many made above expected progress. Current school records show that even more pupils are expected to make good progress this year. Reading is a strength of the school. Pupils read well and say they enjoy reading. Younger pupils make good use of their understanding of phonics to break down unfamiliar words and read them accurately, even when they do not always fully understand their meaning.
- In 2014, results in writing were above average. They showed all pupils made at least expected progress, with half making better progress than expected. This was the result of pupils having more opportunities to write extensively in different subjects and reflected the good training given to teachers and teaching

assistants. Current school data and inspection evidence show the number of pupils making better than expected progress has risen again this year. The school's provisional 2015 data has been moderated by the local authority and judged to be accurate.

- Most pupils made at least the progress expected of them in mathematics in 2014, with many making better progress than expected. Current school data and inspection evidence show that a higher number of pupils are likely to make more than expected progress this year. This is the result of exceptionally strong teaching of mathematics for older pupils.
- The most-able pupils generally achieve well. The school has arranged for them to work with the local secondary school so that it can extend and challenge them more effectively, and this is paying off. Most teachers ensure that the work they set for these pupils in the classroom offers an appropriate level of challenge. They generally make good use of any opportunities to extend pupils' thinking so that they learn even more quickly. The impact of this is shown in the rising numbers of pupils reaching the highest levels of attainment in the end of key stage tests. Just occasionally, when the work does not really stretch them, their progress slows.
- Pupils supported through pupil premium funding make good progress overall. They make better progress than their classmates in reading, writing and mathematics. However, the number of disadvantaged pupils leaving Year 6 in 2014 was too small to make a detailed comparison of their attainment with pupils nationally.
- Disabled pupils and those who have educational special needs make good progress throughout the school because teachers identify their needs early and provide extra help in the classroom or one-to-one support with a trained teaching assistant. The impact of this support is closely monitored by the special educational needs coordinator and senior leaders to ensure these pupils make the progress expected.

The early years provision is good

- The leadership of the early years is good. The early years manager and the Reception class teacher work well together. As a result, more children have reached good levels of development across all areas of learning this year than in the past. Activities are well organised and adults provide rich and meaningful experiences for children that capture their interest and make them keen to learn. This ensures they are well prepared to start Key Stage 1.
- Achievement is good. Boys and girls achieve equally well, with the exception of writing, where girls are performing at a slightly better level than the boys. Adults provide many opportunities for pupils to write inside the classroom and outside in the playground area. Children's learning journals contain good examples of their early writing and show clearly how it develops through the year.
- Teaching is good. Adults use their good questioning skills very effectively to develop children's language skills and vocabulary. Children listen carefully to instructions and respond quickly to what their teachers tell them to do. They show great enthusiasm for all activities provided. They behave well as routines throughout the early years are well established and help them settle quickly into school life.
- During the inspection the new intake for September 2015 were in school. They settled quickly into classroom routines because staff made them feel welcome and secure by establishing good relationships with them very quickly.
- Staff ensure the children are safe at all times, both in the classroom and in the outside area. Children are kept safe from the sun by the use of sun hats and reminded constantly to drink water during hot weather.

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	115093
Local authority	Thurrock
Inspection number	462031

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	202
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lisa Fergus
Headteacher	Travis Martinson
Date of previous school inspection	10 July 2013
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