

# Hermitage Primary School

Hampstead Norreys Road, Hermitage, Berkshire RG18 9SA

**Inspection dates** 10–11 February 2016

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- Strong leadership from the headteacher, other leaders and governors has greatly improved the quality of teaching and pupils' progress since the last inspection.
- Teachers generally make good use of the school's new systems to track pupils' progress, so that they quickly identify any who are falling behind and give them extra help.
- Boys and girls achieve well. The most-able pupils reach high standards, and pupils with special educational needs or disability are helped to do well.
- Teamwork is strong across the school. Staff work together well to make improvements in provision.
- Teachers' consistently high expectations of pupils' hard work and behaviour mean that classrooms are orderly and progress is good.
- Teaching assistants make a strong contribution to pupils' learning.
- Children get off to a good start in the Reception class. They are happy and settled, enjoy the different activities and make good progress.
- Pupils behave well and, rightly, feel safe in school. Their positive attitudes and excellent relationships mean that they collaborate very well in their learning. They are keen to succeed and take a pride in their achievements.
- The school's curriculum provides pupils with exciting and varied experiences that promote their learning in a broad range of subjects, as well as their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They do well in a wide variety of sports. Pupils make good use of their writing skills in other subjects.
- Phonics (how different sounds are represented by different letters) is generally taught well, and supports pupils' high standards in reading.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There are still some inconsistencies in teaching, particularly in setting work at the right level for all groups, in aspects of marking and in some adults' subject knowledge.
- The school's new assessment system does not provide leaders with a clear enough picture of the progress of different groups of pupils.

## Full report

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

- Eliminate the remaining inconsistencies in teaching, so that aspects that are strengths in some lessons are of high quality in all, in particular by:
  - making sure that tasks are suitably challenging for all pupils, and responding more promptly to adjust them when it is clear that some pupils find the work too easy
  - ensuring that pupils always respond to the advice teachers give when marking their books, in line with the school's marking policy
  - filling some gaps in adults' subject knowledge, particularly in phonics.
- Refine the school's new assessment systems to give a clearer and more accurate picture of the progress of different groups to leaders, so that any issues can be identified and addressed more quickly.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher has provided very clear leadership since the previous inspection. With the increasingly effective support of other leaders, including governors, she has firmly embedded a culture of high expectations for the quality of teaching and pupils' progress.
- The senior leadership team concentrates its efforts successfully on checking up on the quality of education and continually modifying provision to make it better. Subject leaders play a good role in this, and have been instrumental in ensuring that the curriculum is more wide-ranging and interesting, at the same time as the school has boosted achievement in English and mathematics. Staff work together as an effective team whose work is dedicated to improving pupils' progress and personal development.
- The senior leaders and governors manage the quality of teaching well and this is a major factor in the improvements made since the previous inspection. Regular and rigorous evaluations of teaching draw on direct observation of lessons, as well as checking planning and work in books and, crucially, pupils' progress. Leaders give teachers specific targets for their work, and hold them to account for meeting them. Teaching is much more consistent as a result, although some aspects are still too variable at times.
- Good leadership of the early years provision has resulted in much more purposeful activities in the Reception class, and better achievement for children. Leadership of the provision to support children with special educational needs or disability has been effective in helping individual pupils to achieve well. The new leader of this aspect (the special educational needs coordinator) is working with senior staff to devise systems that will give a better overview of provision and progress in the school as a whole.
- The curriculum is firmly based on the National Curriculum, but ranges well beyond this with activities that excite pupils' interest and strongly support their positive attitudes to learning. The recent focus on developing learning outdoors, particularly for the youngest children, makes a particularly strong contribution to this. Pupils' engagement is also greatly enhanced by the wide range of extra-curricular activities available, including in music, and a range of physical activities.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. The strong focus of the curriculum on pupils' personal development is particularly effective in developing their positive relationships with each other and with staff, and their perseverance and thoughtfulness. The active teaching of British values, including valuing diversity and the opinions of others, and pupils' active participation in democracy through electing the school council, for example, prepare them well for life in modern Britain.
- The success the school has in competitions in different sports and pupils' enthusiasm for physical education (PE) reflect the good use made of the extra government funding. This has been used successfully to boost staff skills in teaching PE, as well as extending the variety of activities available to pupils.
- The school had a long-established system to track pupils' progress based on the old system of 'levels' set nationally. This gave leaders a clear overview of how different groups of pupils were making progress, so they could swiftly act to deal with any issues. For the last 18 months, in line with the government's new guidelines, the school has trialled a new system for assessing without the old national 'levels'. Senior leaders extensively refined this system at the start of this school year. The new system still gives clear information about the progress of individuals, and teachers use this effectively to plan suitable activities in class. However, the lack of long-term data and some technical 'blips' in the analysis mean that the system does not give leaders the same clear information about the progress of different groups as in the past. Senior leaders are working to see how this shortcoming can be overcome.
- The school has spent pupil premium funding effectively. The very small number of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals are given academic support and challenge that are tailored to their individual needs and abilities. The school checks their progress carefully, and records show that they do well in the light of their starting points and their particular needs and circumstances. The school targets help for those pupils from armed forces families on helping them make the transition into this school, both socially and academically, and into smoothing their progress if they move on elsewhere. In addition, for all eligible pupils, funding is spent to ensure that they can play a full part in all aspects of school life.
- The local authority provides good support to the school. Governors and senior staff value the extra help they have been given in providing training, which has all been centred on raising the quality of teaching and learning. Regular visits to the school help leaders to validate their own judgements, and challenge and support them in improving the quality of education.

- Parents are given good information about the school and how their children are doing. The school uses homework well to back up work in class, and this also gives parents an insight into their children's school life. Parents are positive about the school and value what it does for their children.
- **The governance of the school**
  - Governors have extremely good arrangements for checking on how well the school is doing. They are well organised and have a clear understanding of pupils' progress and the quality of teaching. This means that governors are well able to challenge the school about its effectiveness, and do so.
  - Governors spend money wisely. For example, they ensure that pay progression for teachers is linked properly to their success in meeting targets. Governors make sure that the funding for pupil premium and for enhancing sports provision is spent sensibly. More importantly, they check that the spending has a positive impact on outcomes for pupils.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The school is vigilant in checking on pupils' well-being, and provides training for staff and governors to ensure that this is done well. Links with parents, and with a range of external agencies, support the school's good arrangements to promote safety. Documentation is updated regularly and provides a firm foundation for good practice.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good**

- Teachers establish clear routines in class and have high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour. Relationships are positive and pupils respond well to their teachers' demands, following instructions cheerfully and trying hard. Lessons are orderly as a result, with disruptions to learning rare.
- Teachers use a good range of strategies to keep pupils involved in tasks. They give pupils interesting work, and pupils respond well to the opportunities they have to sort out their ideas in discussion. Teachers clearly value pupils' contributions and opinions and, as a result, pupils are confident in saying what they think, and in attempting questions even when they are unsure of the answer.
- In the large majority of lessons, teachers use the school's assessment information to plan tasks for different groups that are challenging but manageable. This strongly supports pupils' progress and their involvement and interest in their work. Occasionally, however, this is not done accurately enough, so work can be too difficult for some pupils, or too easy for others.
- A key strength of many lessons is the way that teachers and other adults keep a close eye on how pupils are getting on with their work. They identify any who are struggling or confused, and usually provide them with extra help, which enables them to succeed. In the majority of lessons, they also challenge those who are successful to try something more difficult, or to refine their work. Occasionally, however, teachers fail to react when some pupils are doing tasks that are too easy for them. At such times, pupils can quickly lose interest, their concentration wanders, and their progress is too slow.
- Teachers give pupils good feedback on how they are doing so they can improve their work. Feedback through the marking of books is strong in the way that teachers reinforce and praise positive aspects and point out any mistakes or weaknesses. In line with the school's policy, teachers often give pupils extra little tasks to reinforce their learning, or ask them to correct their mistakes. When pupils follow through on this, improvements in pupils' understanding are clear, particularly in mathematics. In some books, however, teachers do not always ensure that pupils respond to the advice and suggestions they give, so opportunities to extend learning are missed.
- Teachers generally have good subject knowledge so that their explanations are clear and at the right level for the pupils' understanding. Other adults are usually well briefed so that they make a major contribution to pupils' learning, both in class and when supporting small groups or individuals. Occasional gaps in subject knowledge, however, can slow learning, for example, when adults do not model sounds and words clearly enough in phonics lessons.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

is good

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils are developing into articulate and thoughtful young people who value each other and their ideas, and are keen to learn. They react positively to the school's consistent promotion of positive values throughout the day.
- Pupils feel safe in school and rightly so. They are able to explain how the school keeps them safe, and also how it teaches them how to keep safe themselves in different situations, such as on the roads or when using the internet.
- Pupils make a good contribution to safety in school by their own sensible behaviour, and by how the older pupils take responsibility for helping look after younger ones, in their roles as playground helpers or prefects, for example. They are proud of these roles and take them seriously.
- Pupils have a good understanding of different forms of bullying, such as cyber-bullying, and know how it differs from other misbehaviour. They say that it is rare in school, and that adults deal with any instances swiftly. They have a good understanding of right and wrong, and strongly condemn any thought of racist behaviour, for example.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They get on well together and greatly value their friendships. This strongly supports their progress when they work collaboratively, sharing ideas and listening thoughtfully to each other's suggestions. This was seen when pupils in Year 5 made great strides in their learning about science and technology as they designed and constructed model 'seeds' together.
- Pupils generally work hard in class and concentrate well. They listen attentively to their teachers, follow instructions thoughtfully and are keen to succeed. They deal well with setbacks, persevering with difficult work, asking for help if they need it, and making improvements and changes when the teacher asks. However, when work is too easy for them, some pupils lose interest, and then their concentration fades and their progress is weak.
- Pupils greatly enjoy school and this is shown in their above-average attendance.

## Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Achievement is good. Pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics, whatever their starting points or circumstances. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Standards are above average by the end of Year 6.
- Boys and girls now make similarly good progress across the school. Weaknesses in boys' progress in the past have been addressed systematically by ensuring that activities in all subjects are designed to appeal to boys' interests as well as they do to girls'.
- The most-able pupils now make particularly good progress. Teachers routinely give them more challenging work in lessons so that they are able to deepen and extend their understanding. Other initiatives, such as the regular meeting with high-attaining pupils from other local schools to work on mathematics, also help them reach high standards.
- Achievement in reading is particularly strong. This is enhanced by the improved teaching of phonics, shown initially in the improved scores pupils have had in the phonics check in Year 1. By the end of Year 6, pupils are fluent readers who tackle a range of texts with competence. In conversation, several spoke very positively about the many texts they had free access to in the library.
- Pupils are fluent writers, and use a joined style that helps them get their thoughts onto paper easily, as well as supporting their good spelling. Their many opportunities to write in a variety of styles in different subjects, previously a weakness, strongly support their good progress.
- Pupils with special educational needs or disability achieve well. Both in class and in small groups, teachers give them work that is matched to their needs in terms of being challenging but manageable. Extra adults also give them support when appropriate, but also ensure that they do the best they can. Those pupils who have particular difficulties in conforming to the school's expectations of behaviour are given very successful help so their behaviour improves, as does their achievement, and such behaviours do not interfere with the learning of others.

- Pupils in receipt of support from pupil premium funding make, overall, the same good progress as their classmates, and similar progress to that of other pupils nationally. Pupils with parents in the armed forces are successfully helped to settle in when they arrive, and they make good progress.
- There is evidence of good progress in other subjects. Pupils' artwork, for example, shows a good level of skill, and their work in science covers the curriculum appropriately, with investigative skills and scientific knowledge developed well.

## Early years provision

is good

- The early years leader has worked successfully to improve provision since the previous inspection. Activities are purposeful and hold children's interest, so they make good progress.
- Children start in Reception with skills and understanding that are broadly typical for their age. Recently, they have left the class with above-average standards, and well prepared for Year 1. In 2015, although boys lagged a little behind girls in their results, they did much better than boys nationally because of the improved way the school has structured activities. Adults now make very effective use of assessment information, as well as information about children's own interests, to plan the curriculum.
- Teaching is good, with all the adults working together in Reception as an effective team. A key strength is the way that adults monitor children's play and intervene effectively to extend their learning and vocabulary. Adults question children skilfully to develop their understanding.
- A wide range of exciting activities is provided in the classroom and in the outside area. The children are able to flow freely from one to another, unless they are involved in a specific activity with an adult. Because the activities are engaging, they sustain children's interest and concentration so that they make good progress. Good opportunities to use computers develop their understanding well.
- The teacher makes good provision to develop and reinforce children's basic literacy and numeracy skills in many activities, both indoors and outside. However, opportunities to do so are sometimes missed. For example, when children excitedly dug up 'dinosaur bones' in the sandpit, they were not encouraged to record their findings.
- The adults successfully give a high priority to the promotion of children's welfare and personal development. Children's behaviour and attitudes are good. Adults continually model good behaviour and politeness, and frequently give children gentle reminders about the importance of consideration for others, sensible behaviour and sharing together. Good relationships between adults and children ensure that these messages are taken on board. This can be seen in children's cheerful, friendly and determined attitudes, and the way they play together purposefully, chatting to share ideas and taking turns happily.
- Links with parents are strong and they are pleased with how well their children settle into the Reception class. The online assessment system, which the Reception staff are using to record children's activities and progress, is available to parents online, and several parents mentioned how helpful they find it.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	109815
<b>Local authority</b>	West Berkshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10002302

This inspection 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>	191
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Rosie Bass
<b>Headteacher</b>	Peta Collicott
<b>Telephone number</b>	01635 200355
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.hermitage.westberks.dbprimary.com">www.hermitage.westberks.dbprimary.com</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:office@hermitage.w-berks.sch.uk">office@hermitage.w-berks.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	15–16 October 2013

## Information about this school

- The school is a little smaller than average for a primary school.
- The very large majority of the pupils are White British, with others coming from a range of different ethnic heritages. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs or disability is average.
- Children in the early years provision are taught full time in a single Reception class.
- The school has very few pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, or who are looked after by the local authority, and so supported by pupil premium funding. However, about one in eight pupils is supported by pupil premium funding because one of their parents is a member of the armed forces.
- The school has recently opened a breakfast club in school for its own pupils. There is also an after-school club on the site, which is managed privately. This is inspected and reported upon separately.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in mathematics, reading and writing by the end of Year 6.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning at least once in each class. Senior staff accompanied the inspectors on two of these visits. Several short visits were also made to check on the teaching of phonics, reading and spelling.
- Inspectors checked a variety of documentation, particularly that related to pupils' progress and how the school keeps them safe. They looked in pupils' books and at work on display around the school.
- The team met with several groups of pupils formally, and chatted informally with many others. Inspectors observed pupils in the playground, eating lunch and in assembly, as well as around the school. Several pupils were heard reading.
- Inspectors met with members of staff, members of the governing body, and with a representative of the local authority.
- The team took note of 16 replies to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, as well as written comments submitted by parents. Inspectors also looked at the results of the school's own recent survey of parental opinion, and 10 replies from staff to a questionnaire were analysed.

## Inspection team

Steven Hill, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Clare Morgan

Ofsted Inspector



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