

Hellingly Community Primary School

North Street, Hellingly, Hailsham, East Sussex BN27 4DS

Inspection dates	16–17 June 2016
Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
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

- The headteacher’s uncompromising determination to raise standards since the previous inspection has been very successful. Teaching has improved and the progress pupils make, especially in English, has improved dramatically.
- School leaders all manage their areas of responsibility enthusiastically and with a clarity of vision to achieve the best outcomes possible. As a result, pupils throughout the school are making better progress and the quality of teaching has improved so it is now consistently good.
- Outcomes at the end of key stage 2 have improved in reading, writing and mathematics because more pupils are making good progress.
- Leaders, coherently, ensure that pupils’ achievements are rigorously measured against key milestones in the school’s curriculum. Any underachievement is acted upon quickly.
- The curriculum is broad, balanced and interesting. It promotes pupils’ personal development exceptionally well and prepares them for life in modern Britain.
- Governors have the skills and expertise to hold school leaders to account and effectively shape the strategic direction of the school. They stringently challenge leaders to check that outcomes for all are improving.
- The school’s policies and processes to keep pupils safe from harm are effective. Pupils’ welfare is the school’s highest priority.
- Behaviour has improved and is now good. This is the case in lessons and around the school.
- Children make good progress in the early years provision, ensuring that they are well prepared for the next stage of school life.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils do not always check the accuracy of their spelling and punctuation in English.
- There are a few occasions when the most able pupils are not challenged enough in mathematics.
- There are not enough opportunities for boys in the early years to write independently.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that it is typically outstanding and enables all groups of pupils to make rapid progress by ensuring that:
 - all teachers focus on pupils' accuracy in spelling and punctuation
 - the most able pupils are provided with challenging tasks more quickly in mathematics
 - boys in the early years are provided with irresistible opportunities to write independently.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is outstanding

- Since the previous inspection the headteacher's relentless determination to improve the quality of teaching and accelerate the progress made by all groups of pupils has been highly successful.
- There is an extremely positive and ambitious culture within the school. Everyone works together to achieve the best for the pupils of Hellingly. Every member of staff who completed the online staff survey agreed that the school has improved a great deal since the previous inspection and all staff have a clear understanding of what school leaders are trying to achieve.
- Together, the headteacher and deputy headteacher articulate extremely high expectations and have a clear understanding of the many strengths and relative weaknesses across the school. They provide clear and challenging feedback to staff that has had a direct impact on improving the quality of teaching and raising standards.
- Senior leaders have deliberately identified those teachers with the necessary skills and personal qualities to become successful middle leaders. These middle leaders, who are responsible for a key stage or key areas of the curriculum such as mathematics or phonics (letters and the sounds that they make), have benefited from excellent training and development to enable them to lead with confidence and now hold others to account.
- All school leaders openly share and build on information associated with pupil progress and teacher performance, although there are a few occasions when processes are duplicated. The management and scrutiny of each teacher's ongoing performance is detailed and continuous. This has led to examples of rapid improvements in the quality of teaching.
- Leaders are involved in a range of monitoring activities that check on the quality of teaching. They demonstrate a forensic ability to scrutinise pupils' books to ensure that all pupils are making the progress they are capable of. Leaders identify if pupils are falling behind in their learning and take appropriate action to help them catch up quickly.
- Curriculum leaders are acutely aware of strengths and weaknesses in their area of responsibility. They gather evidence, produce action plans and carefully check how well pupils are doing. They have a clear idea about how their priorities fit in with the overall school vision and they can give precise examples of how they have had a positive impact on improving the work of other teaching staff.
- Leaders responsible for pupils who have special educational needs or disability ensure that appropriate provision is put in place and that work with outside agencies has a positive impact. As a result, this group of pupils are making good progress from their starting points. Parents who spoke to inspectors also confirm that this is the case.
- Pupils say they enjoy the interesting curriculum. It is broad and balanced and provides pupils with a wide range of opportunities to develop their knowledge, understanding and skills in different subject areas and also to develop their cultural awareness. Opportunities to apply written, mathematical and artistic skills across the curriculum are expertly built into termly plans.
- During the week when the inspection took place, Year 6 pupils were being visited by a group of pen pals from a school in France. The pupils from both schools took part in a range of cultural, sporting and adventurous activities together during the week. This was an excellent opportunity, where pupils were able to apply their learning in French and to work together to understand the similarities and differences between the two European cultures.
- Pupil premium funding for disadvantaged pupils is used effectively and is continuously reviewed so that it has a clear impact on closing gaps in attainment. Recently the funding has been used to allow the deputy headteacher to work across the school improving teaching, which has increased progress for all groups, including the disadvantaged. She has been a role model to other staff and clearly raised aspirations about what can be achieved throughout the school.
- The primary sports grant has been used very well. There has been a significant improvement in rates of participation in after-school clubs and competitive sport. Targeted training has also helped to improve teachers' skills in teaching physical education.
- School leaders have managed recent changes in teaching staff well. Their decisions have been made to cause the least disruption possible to pupils.
- The vast majority of parents who completed the online Parent View questionnaire believe that the school is well led and managed and would be happy to recommend it to another parent.
- The local authority has provided the school with appropriate and helpful support since the monitoring visit by HMI in May 2014.

■ The governance of the school

- There has been a marked improvement in governance. Governors responded robustly to the outcomes of the review of governance that was commissioned following the previous inspection. They have completed and implemented all of the recommendations.
 - The current governing body has an excellent range of skills and experience. Aply led by a committed and insightful chair, they know the school extremely well and clearly explain and justify the key actions that have led to recent rapid improvements in the school.
 - School documentation relating to governance shows that governors receive detailed presentations and information from different school leaders. They ask these leaders incisive and challenging questions to ensure that all pupils are receiving the best learning opportunities possible.
 - Governors have a strong understanding of their role in safeguarding and in ensuring that the school's curriculum is broad and balanced. They know that pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education and life in modern Britain because they are achieving higher standards and ensure that values such as perseverance, tolerance and democracy are at the centre of all that they aim to achieve.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. There are robust and secure policies and routines in place to keep pupils safe in all aspects of school life. Absence from school is routinely followed up and any prolonged absence is investigated tenaciously to ensure that pupils are safe from harm. Staff receive regular relevant training and there are strong links with other agencies to ensure that all pupils are kept safe in and out of school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Teaching has improved and is now consistently good across the school. This is helping pupils to make faster progress in their learning.
- There is a consistency of approach across the school that is characterised by teachers having high expectations and strong subject knowledge. They use assessment information well to plan the next steps in learning and provide pupils with a range of interesting tasks. Learning is often fun and meaningful. This leads to higher levels of enjoyment and engagement using well-established routines such as the use of talk partners to challenge each other's thinking.
- Teaching assistants are well skilled, have good subject knowledge and are well deployed to support groups and individuals. However, on a few occasions some adults could raise their expectations even further for pupils who find learning more challenging or have special educational needs or disability.
- The teaching of phonics is a strength of the school. Teachers and teaching assistants have good subject knowledge, which they apply with precision. As a result, the vast majority of Year 2 pupils can now use a range of strategies to work out unfamiliar words when reading.
- The school has developed its own systematic approach to the teaching of writing. Writing is first modelled by the teacher (or an author), it is then imitated by pupils who keep the same style but make changes to their content. Finally, pupils write independently, applying their skills and what they have learned. While the school's structured approach has been very successful in improving outcomes in writing, there are some missed opportunities for pupils to think for themselves or check the accuracy of their spelling and punctuation.
- Opportunities to apply pupils' writing skills in other areas of the curriculum are exploited well, especially in science. For example, in Year 2 pupils were writing detailed descriptions of their seeds at various stages of growth, while Year 5 pupils were writing explanation texts about human growth and development.
- In mathematics, a consistent approach of teaching fluency, problem solving and reasoning is developing well across the school. This is leading to pupils having a greater conceptual understanding of mathematics.
- In a particularly successful mathematics lesson, the teacher modelled calculation strategies to solve some multi-step problems involving time. Pupils then had to solve a range of problems themselves that quickly developed in difficulty. They independently and accurately decided whether they were able to confidently work alone on the tasks, needed the informal support of a partner, or needed the more structured support of an adult to be successful.
- However, there are still a few occasions in other mathematics lessons where the most able pupils are sometimes not challenged by work that is too easy, when they could be moved on to more challenging problems more quickly.
- Consistent and succinct constructive written and oral feedback from teachers is helping pupils to make good progress in their learning.

- The school's own system of assessment is well developed. Pupils are assessed regularly against agreed milestones in the curriculum. If pupils are falling behind, effective actions are put in place to help them catch up.
- Parents who completed the online Parent View survey are pleased with the quality of teaching their children are receiving and the information they receive about their progress. When compared to other schools nationally, parents are overwhelmingly positive about the quality of homework pupils receive.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupil's personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils have a very well developed sense of how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations. They told inspectors that they feel safe in school because they are well cared for, by staff and each other. Their understanding of how to stay safe online is extremely well developed. Pupils have successfully applied what they have learned in school to keep themselves safe and report any concerns.
- Pupils feel well supported, and singled out the work of the pastoral leader, who they said was 'a big part of the school' and 'always there for us'. Pupils are confident that any concern, however small or large, will be dealt with sensitively. Furthermore, pupils are given the skills to learn to deal with issues themselves.
- Pupils enjoy the opportunity to debate moral issues, such as understanding the plight of Greek refugees. Through these opportunities, other cross-curricular work and regular trips and visits, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is extremely well developed. Older pupils can give real-life examples of how they have applied the school's motto of 'Respect, Achievement, Perseverance' in new situations.
- The physical and mental well-being of pupils and staff is given high priority. The recently introduced 'daily mile' initiative has helped improve fitness and stamina and given the whole school a shared focus on developing a healthy lifestyle.
- Pupils have a wide range of opportunities to take on responsibilities throughout the school. Roles such as technicians, membership of the school council and membership of the pupil leadership team are highly regarded. Year 6 pupils represented the school well as respectful and welcoming ambassadors to their French guests during the inspection.
- The excellent improvements in attitudes to learning have contributed well to the improved progress that pupils are making. A consistent example across the school is how pupils work together with partners to discuss issues and politely challenge each other to improve their work.
- Parents, pupils and staff confirm that the very infrequent incidents of bullying are dealt with effectively by school leaders.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Behaviour has clearly improved since the previous inspection. Around the school, pupils have good manners and are courteous and respectful to visitors. At lunchtime, the dining hall is a calm environment where pupils chat politely while eating their lunch sensibly.
- The playground is well supervised at break and lunchtimes and pupils play well together. Inspectors spoke to a group of pupils at breaktime who said that they enjoy the organised 'game of the day' and prefer the new arrangements where older pupils have a playground to themselves.
- During the inspection, lessons flowed smoothly, with very little low-level disruption. This matches the school's records of good behaviour over time. On a few occasions, inspectors observed some adults being over-officious in managing very minor off-task behaviour. This distracted the adult and the pupils from the learning in hand and potentially slowed progress.
- Pupils enjoy collecting and spending commitment tokens that record and reward positive behaviour. Parents receive regular updates on how well their child is doing. School records show that incidents of poor behaviour are reducing.
- Overall attendance is in line with national averages and the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent is well below national figures. There are good strategies in place to improve attendance and punctuality.
- The vast majority of parents who completed the online Parent View survey believe that behaviour is well managed at the school. They like the 'tightness' of the school's procedures, especially around the smooth and timely start to the school day.

Outcomes for pupils are good

- Since the previous inspection pupils have made better progress through key stage 2. As a result attainment has risen in reading, writing and mathematics so that pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education at secondary school.
- School assessment information and work in pupils' books confirm that the vast majority of current pupils are making good progress towards achieving challenging targets in reading and writing.
- Outcomes in the phonics screening check in Year 1 are consistently high due to the good-quality teaching in this important area.
- As pupils progress through the school they develop a strong understanding of the correct use of grammar and punctuation. However, sometimes teachers do not ensure that pupils check the accuracy of the spelling and punctuation in their writing.
- In mathematics, current pupils are making good progress in terms of developing their skills and knowledge because the quality of teaching and the curriculum being followed has improved. Across the school, pupils have a clear conceptual understanding of the mathematics they are using rather than purely following a process. Pupils' books show that they are able to complete a range of interesting problem-solving and reasoning tasks.
- On a few occasions the progress of the most able pupils in mathematics lessons and over time is not as rapid as it could be. This is because pupils sometimes have to complete tasks that are too easy or they are not given the more challenging work quickly enough.
- Disadvantaged pupils are making similar progress to their peers. However, the proportion exceeding the progress the school expects for this group of pupils is stronger in reading and writing than it is in mathematics. This matches published assessment information that shows that gaps in attainment in reading and writing were closing more quickly than they were in mathematics, despite the overall improvement in progress.
- The most able pupils are making similar progress to their peers based on their starting points. They especially benefit from the many opportunities to apply their reading, writing and mathematics skills across the curriculum.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability making the expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics is similar to the proportions for all pupils. However, a smaller proportion of these pupils are making accelerated progress to close gaps in attainment.

Early years provision is good

- From starting points that are typical for their age, children make good progress in the early years to achieve a good level of development that is consistently higher than the national average. As a result children are well prepared to begin the national curriculum in Year 1. This good progress, in all areas of learning, was evident to inspectors in children's books and journals and through their discussions with staff, parents and children.
- The early years leader has a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in children's performance and in the provision as a whole. For example, she knows that boys make less progress in writing than the girls. This is because there are not enough independent writing activities that are suitably appealing to them.
- Direct teaching in the early years is accurate and interesting and engages children well. This is because there is a good level of challenge and work is pitched well to meet the needs of individual children.
- The teacher and teaching assistant both teach phonics accurately and confidently and this sets the firm foundations on which Year 1 teachers build to achieve high outcomes in this area.
- During independent learning time there are some missed opportunities to reinforce learning through role play and other independent activities. For example, a very attractive ice cream parlour was not used as effectively as it could be to reinforce previous learning in mathematics.
- Behaviour in the early years is consistently good. Children are polite and friendly and inquisitive about visitors to the classroom. On some occasions children wander between independent activities without being redirected or refocused on appropriate learning activities.
- There are good partnerships with parents and external agencies to ensure that children have a smooth and successful start to school life. All safeguarding and welfare requirements are fully met.

School details

Unique reference number	114396
Local authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	10012243

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	243
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Diana Aldridge
Headteacher	Kyra Ward
Telephone number	01323 844346
Website	www.hellingly.e-sussex.sch.uk
Email address	office@hellingly.e-sussex.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	12–13 February 2014

Information about this school

- The school is slightly smaller than the average primary school. There is one class in each year group, apart from Year 1, where there are two classes, to accommodate a bulge in admissions.
- Early years provision is provided in one full-time Reception class.
- Less than one in ten pupils are eligible for the pupil premium (additional government funding for disadvantaged pupils), which is much lower than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is below that found nationally.
- The overwhelming majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set out the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school meets statutory requirements in terms of the information published on the school website.
- There have been a number of staff changes this academic year due to teachers taking family leave.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in each class at least once and attended two assemblies. Most of the observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- A wide range of pupils' work books were looked at by inspectors working with the key stage leaders.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, school business manager, other school leaders, five governors (including the chair of the governing body) and a representative from the local authority.
- Discussions took place with pupils informally in class, in the dining hall and in the playground to seek their views about the school. An inspector also met with a group of pupils from Years 3, 4 and 5 more formally to discuss many aspects of school life. There were no responses to the online pupil questionnaire.
- Inspectors heard some pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 read.
- Inspectors scrutinised the school website and a range of school documents, including: assessment information, safeguarding and behaviour records, the school's own records about the quality of teaching and documents that relate to governance.
- The 115 responses to Ofsted's online Parent View questionnaire, including a large number of free-text comments, were considered by inspectors. An inspector also spoke to parents at the school gate at the beginning of the inspection.
- Inspectors considered 16 responses to the online questionnaire for staff.

Inspection team

Lee Selby, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Matt Batchelor

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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