

# Haddon Dene School

57 Gladstone Road, Broadstairs, Kent CT10 2HY

## Inspection dates

8–10 November 2016

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- Over time, leaders have not built well enough on the school's strengths to keep the school continuously improving.
- Leaders' checks on the school's effectiveness are not rigorous enough.
- Beyond the headteacher, there is no established and effective leadership structure in the school to drive improvement.
- Opportunities for teachers to develop and improve their practice have been limited. The quality of teaching is too variable.
- Pupils do not make consistently good progress across the school, including in the early years.
- Teachers' expectations are not consistently high enough, including of most-able pupils. In some classes, teachers do not check or build well enough on what pupils already know and can do to secure good progress.
- Where teaching is less effective, some pupils 'switch off' and their behaviour deteriorates. Some pupils do not move around the school in a calm and orderly manner.
- In some classes, pupils do not have enough opportunities to make good progress through using their writing and mathematics skills in different contexts. Pupils have too few opportunities to investigate or experiment in science.

### The school has the following strengths

- Rich and varied opportunities in sports and the arts contribute well to pupils' good personal development.
- The new headteacher is passionate and determined to achieve the best for pupils. All of the independent school standards are met.
- Children get off to a good start in the Nursery. Pupils' progress also accelerates in Years 5 and 6. A high proportion are selected to continue their education in grammar schools.
- Pupils feel safe, are well cared for and valued as individuals.

### Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

## Full report

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

- Improve leadership and management, including of the early years, by:
  - increasing the rigour of checks on the effectiveness of the school's work, including teaching, so that leaders have a deep and precise understanding of strengths and weaknesses
  - developing a leadership structure that has sufficient capacity to drive the necessary improvements in a timely manner
  - providing appropriate professional development and support for teachers as well as holding them to account for the quality of their teaching, learning and assessment
  - establishing a consistent and effective way to monitor the progress of different groups of pupils from their various starting points.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, including in the early years, by:
  - ensuring that teachers' expectations are consistently high enough
  - building more quickly on pupils' existing starting points to ensure that all are properly challenged and make good or better progress, especially the most able
  - checking pupils' understanding carefully in order to decide the right next steps to move them on strongly in their learning
  - sustaining pupils' interest and engagement in lessons.
- Give pupils in all classes enough opportunities to make good or better progress developing, using and applying their skills in writing, mathematics and investigative science.
- Ensure that pupils conduct themselves consistently well throughout the school day.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- Over time, leadership at different levels has not effectively secured consistently good teaching and outcomes for pupils. While many pupils pass selection tests for a grammar school education, pupils' progress is not consistently strong across different subjects or classes throughout the school.
- Leaders' checks on the school's effectiveness lack the necessary rigour. These checks have not provided a sufficiently deep and precise understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses over time to drive improvement more consistently.
- School leadership roles beyond the headteacher are not well developed. This has contributed to areas of inconsistency, for example across the early years. Leadership of provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is at an embryonic stage.
- Teachers have not been provided with sufficient support or professional development opportunities to help them improve and hone their skills. Similarly, systems to hold teachers to account have not been effective enough to secure consistently good teaching.
- Systems for tracking how well pupils are doing rely too much on checking their attainment rather than identifying whether they have made enough progress from their particular starting points. Beyond the annual checks instigated by the proprietor, there is not a consistent and agreed approach to assessing pupils regularly across the school.
- In her first few weeks, the new headteacher has begun to form a broadly accurate picture of areas of strength and areas requiring attention. She feels that the proprietor has empowered her to do what is necessary to lead the school and she is determined to raise standards.
- The headteacher has already begun to take appropriate steps to increase the leadership capacity within the school. Most staff are positive about the start she has made, appreciating her emerging culture of approachability and openness. Teachers observed receiving feedback were receptive to guidance and keen to improve.
- The breadth and variety of opportunities and experiences offered to pupils is a particular strength of the school, especially in sports and the arts. Pupils enthuse about the variety provided by extra-curricular activities. They value these and are understandably proud of their success in competitions.
- As well as equipping pupils with the necessary skills to perform well in grammar school selection tests, the school contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Appreciating Shakespeare's sonnets, interpreting pop art and regular drama opportunities are just some examples of the richness of pupils' experiences. They learn to understand and be tolerant of differences, including learning about a range of religions, and about the importance of democratic processes. They are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Leaders have ensured that all of the independent school standards are met.

## Governance

- The school does not have a governing body. The proprietor, supported by two directors, oversees the work of the headteacher and school.
- Over time, the proprietor and directors have been too reliant on information about pupils' attainment and the headteacher's assertions to demand stronger improvement. Information about the progress of different groups from their particular starting points is not readily accessible to help check the impact of teaching on learning.
- The proprietor is in regular contact with the new headteacher who has kept him well informed of her emerging findings. He is supportive of the headteacher's desire, drive and determination to secure the necessary improvement.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders and staff have created a culture where pupils feel confident and valued, creating a climate that is conducive to pupils voicing concerns. The new headteacher has implemented systems to ensure that concerns are properly documented and responded to.
- Staff recognise the importance of safeguarding pupils. They have been appropriately trained to recognise and act on concerns. This training is kept up to date and takes good account of recent guidance, for example to prevent and tackle possible vulnerability to radicalisation or extremist views. A high proportion of staff are trained as first-aiders.
- A comprehensive safeguarding policy is published on the school's website. It is up to date and takes good account of the latest guidance.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

## Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is too variable and not consistently good enough.
- In some classes, teachers' expectations of pupils' capabilities are not high enough, especially for the most able. They do not build strongly enough on what pupils already know and can do.
- Explicit teaching of grammar and punctuation gives pupils a firm grounding in these skills, enabling them to complete various tasks and exercises accurately. However, in some classes, pupils have too few opportunities to apply this knowledge when writing freely. Similarly, in some classes pupils too rarely get the chance to use their growing competency with mathematical calculations in different contexts. This limits opportunities for pupils to work at greater depth, particularly the most able.
- Some teachers are adept at checking pupils' understanding carefully. For example, skilfully questioning pupils to be certain that they have a secure grasp of the underlying concept, not just learning a process by rote. However, this checking is not consistently strong across classes. Sometimes, teachers do not use assessment information to refine the next steps that pupils need to take to achieve well.

- The better teaching in the school is characterised by strong teacher subject knowledge employed effectively to help pupils learn well. For example, using explanations, modelling and structured questioning to make learning points clear. In these classes, probing questions prompt the most able pupils to think more deeply and explain their reasoning.
- Where present, teachers make effective use of teaching assistants to check pupils' understanding and support their inclusion.
- Teachers make good use of opportunities for homework and home learning. Pupils value this and say that tasks help them to practise and consolidate their skills.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

## Requires improvement

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- This is a caring school. With good reason, a number of parents particularly praised the school's ethos of celebrating individuality and nurturing pupils' confidence and self-belief. Those that know the school recognise its 'community' or 'family' feel.
- There are varied opportunities for pupils to take on additional responsibilities and they assume these roles with pride. The school council are playing a leading role in developing the playground and the head boy and head girl are excellent ambassadors for the school.
- Pupils feel safe. They are confident that there is someone in school they can go to for help if they need it. Pupils' understanding of how to protect themselves and stay safe in various situations develops well, including on their bikes, by the sea and fire safety. They have a sound understanding of the risks involved when using new technologies or the internet, but this is less well developed.
- The full range of inspection evidence indicates that bullying is rare. Pupils report that it is well dealt with should it occur and most parents agree.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Where lessons are not sufficiently challenging or stimulating, a few pupils lose concentration or stop working altogether. Teachers do not always challenge this off-task behaviour and pupils' progress slows. In some lessons, pupils' calling out or low-level fidgeting and chatter disrupts the learning of other pupils. Pupils report that this is not uncommon.
- Some pupils do not conduct themselves consistently well around the school, for example running in the corridors or around corners.
- Pupils are polite, friendly and welcoming. They are respectful to adults, visitors and in most cases to each other. They are confident to contribute their own thoughts and not afraid to make mistakes in front of their peers in this supportive environment.
- Where teaching is better, pupils engage and concentrate well. In these classes, pupils typically set about tasks eagerly, sustain their focus and work hard.

- Pupils attend regularly. Recently, procedures for following up on any absence have correctly been tightened.

### Outcomes for pupils

### Requires improvement

- Pupils do not make consistently strong progress across subjects and year groups. Their work in a range of subjects, including English and mathematics, indicates that their progress is too variable. Leaders do not have systems in place to demonstrate the progress of different groups of pupils from their differing starting points, including for the few pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Opportunities across the school for pupils to use and apply what they learn in different contexts, including in English and mathematics, are too inconsistent. This limits pupils' opportunities to work at greater depth, especially the most able. There are not enough chances for pupils to develop their scientific skills and understanding through carrying out investigations and experiments.
- Pupils make better progress in Years 5 and 6. Year on year, a very high proportion of pupils is selected to continue their secondary education at a grammar school.
- Pupils typically learn to read fluently and with enthusiasm. Most-able pupils discuss their favourite authors meaningfully. While younger pupils mostly develop a secure grasp of phonics, a few do not. The new headteacher is correctly taking steps to ensure that the teaching of phonics is more systematic and consistent to support these pupils.
- In some classes, and particularly towards the top of key stage 2, pupils write thoughtfully and for a range of purposes in different subjects. Older most-able pupils produce mature and sometimes sophisticated writing. While in some classes, the achievement of most-able pupils is limited by the simple, undemanding tasks, in others they are required to reflect carefully to make comparisons or explain their reasoning.
- Pupils do well in sports and the arts. They benefit from a broad range of learning, such as classical studies and learning a modern foreign language from a young age. Overall, pupils are suitably prepared for the next stage of their education.

### Early years provision

### Requires improvement

- The variability in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in the rest of the school is mirrored in the early years provision.
- With no designated early years leader, inconsistencies across the provision have not been precisely identified or effectively tackled.
- In Reception Year, children are not provided with the opportunities to build consistently well enough on the good start that they make in the Nursery. The range of activities and level of challenge provided do not meet children's needs well enough, including the most able children. This affects both their learning and sometimes their behaviour.
- Although children typically develop sufficient skills, knowledge and understanding to be ready for Year 1, they do not make consistently strong progress from their particular starting points.

- Children settle quickly and get off to a good start in the Nursery. Adults know the children very well and use this to create the right opportunities to move them on quickly in their learning. The activities are planned, and sometimes changed, to take close account of children's interests. High expectations and detailed knowledge of individual next steps means that activities are also tailored to promote strong progress.
- In the Nursery, adults listen to and observe children closely, judging carefully when to intervene to provide support, guidance or challenge. A well-chosen mix of questioning, instructions and talking with children means that they develop their skills well from their own starting points, including the most able.
- Throughout the provision, children's behaviour and engagement indicates that they feel safe and secure. Children mix and cooperate well, for example working together to tidy up and put equipment away in Reception Year.
- Links with parents are strong. Regular contact between home and school is purposeful and includes helpful information so that parents can reinforce key learning at home.
- Teachers rightly seek ways to engage with other professionals for the benefit of children. For example, the Nursery teacher attends local early years inclusion meetings. Teachers have sought appropriate advice, working with a speech and language therapist to support children with specific needs, where necessary.
- The school meets the independent school standards in respect of the early years provision.

## School details

Unique reference number	118962
DfE registration number	886/6022
Inspection number	10012903

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	124
Number of part-time pupils	9
Proprietor	Dr Ali Khan
Headteacher	Alison Hatch
Annual fees (day pupils)	£5,535–£7,020
Telephone number	01843 861176
Website	<a href="http://www.haddondene.co.uk">www.haddondene.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:secretary@haddondene.co.uk">secretary@haddondene.co.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	27–28 June 2012

## Information about this school

- Haddon Dene is an independent day pre-preparatory and preparatory school.
- Pupils are taught in single-aged classes, one for each year group. The early years provision consists of a Nursery class and a Reception class.
- Very few pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities. No pupils have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan.
- The headteacher has been in post since September 2016.
- The school was previously inspected in June 2012.
- The school offers a breakfast and after-school club.



## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited all classes to observe teaching and learning. During most of these visits they were accompanied by the headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- They scrutinised a wide range of pupils' work and talked to them about their learning. They also heard some pupils read.
- Inspectors held meetings with pupils, staff, leaders, the proprietor and one of the directors. They also spoke informally with parents.
- They analysed 24 responses to the online survey, Parent View, and 14 questionnaires returned by staff. They considered all of the written comments added to these alongside other inspection evidence.
- Inspectors observed the work of the school throughout the day and scrutinised a range of the school's records and documentation, including all of those pertaining to the independent school standards. They also checked the compliance of premises and facilities against the relevant standards.

## Inspection team

Clive Dunn, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Bruce Waelend

Ofsted Inspector

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