

Hever Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Hever, Edenbridge, Kent TN8 7NH

Inspection dates

20–21 March 2018

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
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

- Leaders and governors have not ensured that all groups of pupils achieve well enough in reading, writing and mathematics.
- In the past year, weaknesses in teaching, interim leadership and governance have hampered pupils' learning.
- There are too many inconsistencies in the quality of teaching. Teaching does not build strongly enough on pupils' prior learning to ensure that all groups of pupils achieve well.
- Standards in English and mathematics are not high enough at the end of key stage 2.
- Teachers' expectations of pupils' learning are not consistently high enough.
- The most able pupils do not achieve as well as they should.
- Teachers and leaders do not check pupils' progress rigorously well to provide a reliable picture of pupils' learning in all year groups.
- Children do not learn well enough during early years because of previous weaknesses in leadership and teaching.
- The roles played by middle and senior leaders in securing improvements in the quality of teaching and learning are not developed sufficiently.
- Recent improvements in governance are not yet sufficiently established to ensure that governors carry out their roles effectively.

The school has the following strengths

- The quality of teaching has improved substantially since the headteacher returned from maternity leave.
- Pupils, including children in early years, want to do their best in school and behave consistently well. They feel safe, secure and valued in school.
- Parents and carers have confidence that the headteacher will secure the necessary improvements in the school.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that all groups of pupils make consistently strong progress across a range of subjects and throughout the school by making sure that:
 - pupils benefit from consistently effective teaching
 - teachers develop a better understanding of how to support pupils of different abilities
 - teachers evaluate pupils' progress accurately and use this information to plan work which builds strongly on pupils' individual needs and prior learning
 - teachers have consistently high expectations of pupils' learning
 - teaching challenges and extends learning for the most able pupils more consistently.
- Improve leadership by:
 - ensuring that recently introduced assessment procedures are fully established and used rigorously by teachers and by leaders at all levels to evaluate teaching and learning
 - making sure that senior and middle leaders are clear about their roles in the school's development and in evaluating the impact of improvements on pupils' learning
 - strengthening recent improvements in governance so that governors are confident about their roles in holding leaders to account and clear about how this will be achieved appropriately.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The past year has been an unsettled time for the school. Numerous staff changes and some significant weaknesses in teaching, governance and interim leadership have disrupted pupils' learning. One parent rightly commented that, 'Last year was a very difficult year for the school', while a pupil understandably described successive changes in teaching and leadership during the past year as 'confusing'.
- Recently introduced assessment procedures are not established securely enough. Variations in the accuracy of teachers' assessments of pupils' learning do not give leaders and governors a sufficiently reliable view of pupils' progress.
- In the past year, leaders have not used SEN funding or pupil premium sufficiently well to support pupils' learning. However, recent improvements in teaching have secured considerable improvements in the progress made by all groups of pupils. The headteacher is clear about further developments needed in leadership and in teaching to ensure that all groups of pupils achieve well.
- Since her return from maternity leave, the headteacher has acted swiftly to address weaknesses in interim leadership and in pupils' learning. For example, she has used good-quality coaching well to improve teaching and to strengthen the role of the leadership team.
- The school is now benefiting from a more settled phase. Teamwork is much better than previously and staff morale is improving.
- The headteacher has introduced a much-needed sense of urgency about securing improvements. She is clear about what needs to be done to restore the school's previous successes and has suitable plans in place. The headteacher has already made a good start by securing significant improvements in teaching and learning, and by building a team of leaders who share her vision for the school's future.
- Parents reported notable improvements in the school since the headteacher's return. For example, one parent commented, 'The school has rapidly regained its former strengths since the headteacher's return', while another said that parents had 'welcomed the headteacher back with open arms'.
- The curriculum provides pupils with a broad and balanced education. Clubs and visits help them to develop personal interests and contribute well to pupils' experience of school. However, inconsistencies in the quality of teaching mean that pupils do not achieve well enough in English, mathematics and other subjects.
- The school's orderly, well-organised and purposeful learning environment contributes well to pupils' enjoyment of school. Pupils' positive attitudes to learning, combined with strong relationships and clear routines, have ensured that behaviour has remained good throughout a tumultuous period in the school's history.
- The curriculum successfully encourages pupils' respect and appreciation for different faiths and cultures, and prepares them well for life in modern Britain. The school's religious values underpin the school's work and provide a caring and positive framework for learning. Pupils listen carefully during assemblies and make thoughtful

and sensitive contributions.

- Leaders use the physical education and sport premium effectively to support pupils' physical development and their enjoyment of school. For example, during the inspection, a group of pupils demonstrated strong collaborative skills and good levels of concentration during a judo lesson.
- Representatives of the local authority and of the Diocese of Rochester have acted decisively and successfully in the past few months to address inadequacies in governance. They continue to support the headteacher well in her mission to secure the school's recovery.

Governance of the school

- Weaknesses in leadership and governance have hampered the school's work during the past year.
- Procedures for governors to check the school's performance are not sufficiently well developed and rely too heavily on too limited a range of evidence about pupils' progress. However, governors are acutely aware of the need to develop this aspect of their work and are scheduled to complete local authority training in the near future. One governor commented, 'Monitoring the school's performance was an issue for the governing body last year – it's not going to be an issue in the future.'
- Governors' roles have improved considerably during the last few months, following the appointment of a number of governors to the governing body, including a new chair of governors.
- The chair of governors provides clear leadership for the governing body. She understands the need to provide support and challenge for school leaders in equal measure. She has established a positive working relationship with the headteacher and works constructively with her fellow governors to secure further improvements in their roles.
- Governors take their responsibility for pupils' security very seriously. They maintained a strong focus on safeguarding during the recent unsettled phase so that pupils' safety was not compromised.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders give pupils' safety an appropriately high priority. They complete recruitment and suitability checks promptly when appointing new members of staff and make sure that the school is an orderly and well-organised environment. As a result, pupils can learn and play safely.
- Members of the office staff keep a close eye on the school's entrance. They consistently follow procedures for checking visitors in and out of the school so that no-one can enter the school unnoticed.
- Parents said that leaders take any concerns seriously and they feel that leaders take prompt action wherever necessary. For example, one parent commented that the

headteacher's regular presence at the school gate means that any worries can be 'nipped in the bud' before becoming more significant.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Inconsistencies in the quality of teaching have led to variations in pupils' progress across the school. Teaching does not build strongly enough on pupils' previous learning in English, mathematics and other subjects.
- Teachers do not evaluate pupils' progress or identify pupils' needs accurately enough to plan learning effectively.
- Teachers' expectations of pupils' learning are not consistently high enough. Teaching does not provide sufficient challenge for the the most able pupils.
- There are variations in the quality of support provided by teaching assistants. Some provide skilful support during lessons. For example, during the inspection, a teaching assistant effectively combined skilful questioning and reassurance to help a pupil to tackle a mathematics task successfully. However, in some cases, teaching assistants are not deployed well enough to ensure similar success.
- The quality of teaching has improved dramatically in the past few months. Teachers have much higher expectations of pupils' learning than previously and are developing a better understanding of how to support pupils of different abilities. Improvements in teaching ensure that pupils learn increasingly well.
- Teachers plan interesting lessons so that pupils are engaged and keen to learn. They use a wide range of approaches to demonstrate and explain learning effectively during lessons. For example, during the inspection, pupils in Year 4 worked very well together to compare, discuss and explore the properties of quadrilaterals, using string and diagrams.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are keen to do well in school and are ambitious for the future. They enjoy school and attend regularly. Pupils' attendance is consistently in line with or above the national average.
- Some of the oldest pupils demonstrate a sensitivity and maturity beyond their years. For example, when discussing changes in leadership in the school last year, a Year 6 pupil commented, 'We were always going to get differences in approach because of different leadership styles, but nothing has changed the school ethos.'
- Pupils feel very safe in school. They have a sensible view of the contribution they can make to their own safety, including when using the internet.
- Pupils understand that the school's rules and procedures help them to stay safe. For example, they know that the office staff keep a close eye on who enters and leaves the

building so that no-one can get in or out of school unnoticed.

- Pupils said that, occasionally, the rough play of others bothers them during playtimes but that bullying is rarely a problem. They are confident that adults will look after them, and one commented, 'I feel safe in the classroom because teachers are always there, and we know that they would fight for us if needed.'

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Most pupils behave well during lessons, playtimes and assemblies. They move around the school sensibly and responsibly.
- Parents have recognised marked improvements in pupils' behaviour since the headteacher's return. Most parents who completed Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, feel that pupils are safe and well behaved.
- Pupils said that they are sometimes distracted during lessons by the silly behaviour of a small number of their classmates. Discussions with senior leaders confirm this view. They are determined to ensure that all pupils behave equally well and continue to focus on improving this aspect of the school's work.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- The quality of pupils' learning varies widely between classes, subjects and year groups. As a result, pupils do not achieve well enough in a range of subjects, including English and mathematics.
- The work in pupils' books illustrates the negative impact that inconsistencies in teaching have had on pupils' progress over time, particularly in the older year groups. The quality of pupils' learning during the past year has been patchy at times, so that pupils have not learned as well as they should, particularly in the older year groups.
- Weaknesses in teaching and in leadership led to a marked decline in outcomes at the end of key stage 2 last year. The proportions of pupils achieving the expected standard in reading, writing, mathematics and science at the end of Year 6 were lower than the national average in 2017.
- The most able pupils do not learn well enough. Too few develop the deeper understanding of English and mathematics needed to achieve the higher standards at the end of key stage 2.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and the small number of disadvantaged pupils in the school make similarly mixed progress to that of their classmates. While some make strong progress, others do not learn well enough.
- Improvements in the quality of teaching during the past few months have made a notable difference to the quality of pupils' learning. Pupils' progress is accelerating rapidly across the school and standards are rising. Considerably more pupils are on track to achieve the expected standard in English and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 in 2018 than in 2017.

- Pupils thoroughly enjoy reading. They regularly read books from the classroom and school libraries and spoke enthusiastically about the books they have read.
- Pupils learn secure phonics skills and use these well to read unfamiliar words. The results of the Year 1 phonics check have been consistently higher than the national average for the past three years. All pupils achieved the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics check in 2017.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- In the past year, weaknesses in adults' understanding of the early years curriculum have meant that teaching does not build strongly enough on children's learning during Reception Year, including for the most able children.
- Adults' assessments of children's progress in key areas of learning, including reading, writing and mathematics, are not rigorous or accurate enough to provide a reliable view of children's learning.
- As with other year groups, teaching during early years does not challenge and extend learning sufficiently, including for the most able children. However, improvements in teaching during the past few months mean that adults use questioning increasingly well to explore and develop children's understanding during lessons.
- The proportions of children achieving a good level of development at the end of early years have been above the national average for the past few years. However, this has not always represented strong progress from children's starting points, which are often higher than typical for children of the same age at the start of Reception Year.
- The teacher's determination to improve provision during early years has been central in securing recent developments in teaching and learning. She has made good use of local authority advice to improve the quality and range of activities provided for children, both indoors and out. Improvements in teaching mean that children are making better progress than previously.
- The early years teacher has established clear routines and caring relationships, which ensure that children feel comfortable and secure. For example, during the inspection, children took care to keep themselves dry by putting waterproofs on before using the 'mud kitchen'.
- The teacher has a perceptive understanding of children's personal needs. She speaks confidently about the considerable strides made by individual children in developing confidence and independence since the start of Reception Year.
- The classroom and outdoor areas provide children with an attractive and inviting place to learn. They happily join in with activities and games.
- Children get on well together and share resources sensibly. For example, during the inspection, children enjoyed decorating pebbles with pens and glitter, enthusiastically explaining their work.
- Children are well behaved and polite. They welcome visitors warmly and speak proudly about their work. Parents are very pleased with the way that their children have settled into school life.

School details

Unique reference number	118718
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10045047

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	133
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Margaret Cooke
Headteacher	Joanna Stratton
Telephone number	01732 862304
Website	www.hever.kent.sch.uk
Email address	office@hever.kent.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	3–4 October 2013

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is lower than that found in most primary schools.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is lower than the national average.
- Most pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below the national average.
- A statutory inspection of Anglican and Methodist schools (SIAMS) was carried out on 29 June 2017, when the distinctiveness and effectiveness of the school as a Church of England School was judged 'good'.
- Interim leadership arrangements were in place during the headteacher's recent

maternity leave.

- In 2017, the school did not meet the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed pupils' learning in seven lessons, including six completed with the headteacher.
- The inspector held discussions with the headteacher and other school leaders, the school's finance and personnel officer and a representative of the local authority. She also met with four governors, including the chair of the governing body.
- The inspector took account of 34 responses to Ofsted's questionnaire, Parent View and considered the views expressed by parents informally during the school day. She also considered 11 responses to the staff questionnaire and 38 responses to the pupil questionnaire.
- The inspector observed the school's work and considered a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation documents, safeguarding policies, the school improvement plan and information about pupils' progress and attendance.
- The inspector reviewed a sample of pupils' work provided by the school, and looked at pupils' work in lessons. She listened to pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 reading.

Inspection team

Julie Sackett, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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