

# Hextable Primary School

Rowhill Road, Hextable, Swanley, Kent BR8 7RL

## Inspection dates

20–21 March 2018

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- Leaders have an accurate understanding of the strengths and development needs of the school. They have taken effective action to continue to improve the school and ensure that it goes from strength to strength.
- Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities have their needs met well. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) is highly effective in ensuring that appropriate provision is in place for pupils. As a result, pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities thrive and make good progress from their starting points.
- Effective provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education permeates all layers of school life. As a result, pupils are confident and prepared well for the next stages of their education.
- Teachers use good subject knowledge to plan lessons across the curriculum which excite and engage pupils. They are effective in assessing pupils' understanding, but they do not consistently challenge the most able pupils.
- Most pupils make good progress from their starting points. In the 2017 national assessments, higher proportions of pupils attained age-related expectations in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of both key stage 1 and key stage 2 than seen nationally. However, the most able pupils did not make as much progress as other pupils, particularly in reading and mathematics.
- Pupils behave well. They are keen to participate in their lessons. They are courteous and polite. Pupils enjoy the space and the many facilities offered by the extensive school grounds.
- Children get off to a good start in the early years. The highly skilled staff and stimulating environment ensure that there are myriad exciting opportunities for children to investigate and learn together. As a result, children make good progress from their starting points. In this way, they are prepared well for Year 1.

## Full report

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

- Ensure that more pupils attain at higher levels across the curriculum by:
  - raising teachers' expectations of the most able pupils to a consistently high level across the school
  - developing teachers' challenging skills so that pupils' ideas and reasoning are more rigorously probed, explored and extended
  - further developing opportunities to link and extend learning across the curriculum.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Senior leaders are united in their determination to ensure that the school's vision of 'Happy, positive and successful lifelong learners' becomes a reality for all the pupils of Hextable Primary School. Leaders ensure that this vision is understood and shared by everyone involved in the school, including the pupils. As a result, the school is a harmonious place in which pupils thrive.
- Parents and carers support the vision of school leaders. Parents who spoke to inspectors, and 98% of those who completed the Ofsted questionnaire, Parent View, agreed that their children were happy at school. One parent, who typified the views of many, wrote: 'Happy, positive and successful lifelong learners; I honestly believe this statement to be true to its word.'
- Leaders have raised achievement across the school. They monitor pupils' outcomes closely so that any issues are quickly identified and acted on. For example, the English leader identified that the proportions of pupils attaining the expected standard in the national phonics screening check in Year 1 fell in 2017. Subsequent staff training and a renewed phonics focus have helped to raise standards. Current pupils are making good progress with their phonics.
- The SENCo is highly skilled. She ensures that pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities have what they need to feel supported and secure. Communication is regular and effective. This helps to ensure that pupils' needs are understood by the adults who support them. Parents appreciate the high levels of care and attention provided by the school. For example, a parent reflecting on choosing Hextable for her child who has SEN and/or disabilities wrote that it was 'the best decision I ever made'.
- The additional funding allocated to develop sports through the sport premium, and disadvantaged pupils through the pupil premium, is spent carefully and effectively to raise participation and achievement. For example, a specialist teacher is demonstrating effective teaching of gymnastics for staff. In this way, skills of both pupils and staff are developed well.
- Because the ethos of the school is central to everyday experience, opportunities to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are plentiful. For example, pupils develop their knowledge of key cultural figures through reference to the class names, including Shakespeare and Mandela. Specific lessons, such as the effective Year 6 session seen during the inspection exploring stereotyping and prejudice, develop pupils' understanding of British values, such as tolerance. Pupils who spoke to inspectors demonstrated a high degree of empathy with, and understanding of, the importance of equality.
- Subject leaders have a good understanding of the skills pupils need to develop in their curriculum areas. They ensure that opportunities to develop these skills are present in the curriculum. However, opportunities to connect and deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding are not yet systematic, particularly in scientific and technical aspects of learning. As a result, the most able pupils are not consistently challenged across the curriculum.

## Governance of the school

- Governance is effective. Governors discharge their strategic responsibilities well. They ensure that they look closely at a range of information about the performance of the school. This helps to make sure that they have a well-informed understanding of strengths and development needs. They use this knowledge effectively to both support and challenge school leaders.
- Governors visit the school regularly to see things for themselves. These visits are appropriately linked to school development focus areas. This means that they have opportunities to talk to staff and pupils about learning and to look at the impact of improvement initiatives.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. All necessary checks are in place at the point of recruitment. Training for staff is regular and comprehensive. This ensures that staff are confident in what to look out for to help keep pupils safe, and are aware of what to do if they have any concerns.
- All parents who completed the Ofsted questionnaire agree that their children are safe at school. Pupils who spoke to inspectors told them that they feel safe. Regular opportunities to learn about e-safety help pupils to understand the importance of online safety.
- Despite the extensive grounds, including the two separate buildings which make up the school buildings, site security is robust. Entry is closely monitored, and processes are regularly reviewed to help ensure that pupils are kept safe.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

**Good**

- Teachers have secure subject knowledge which they use effectively to plan lessons which excite and engage pupils. This helps to ensure that pupils are well motivated and enjoy their learning. Pupils told inspectors that 'we love learning', especially when the curriculum offers them opportunities to make things or even 'mummify' them, as was the case in Year 4 during the inspection!
- Teaching assistants provide skilled and effective support for pupils, including those who have SEN and/or disabilities. For example, in a Year 1 writing lesson, pupils were supported effectively by using a large picture that they had made of a mermaid as a discussion focus. Pupils were further supported in their articulation through appropriate technology.
- The teaching of phonics is systematic and well matched to pupils' needs. Leaders' actions to improve standards and consistency have been effective. Staff are skilled and confident in their phonics teaching. This helps to ensure that pupils are making good progress from their starting points.
- Pupils write well and at length. Their writing demonstrates rich vocabulary choices and secure understanding of sentence structures. Pupils are provided with a wide range of meaningful opportunities to apply their writing skills across the curriculum, particularly within historical and geographical contexts.

- Pupils read widely and often. They enjoy the opportunities for developing reading provided by specific activities such as the 'extreme reading challenge,' where pupils were pictured reading in a variety of situations, such as in swimming pools and on horseback. The attractive library, the regular lunchtime library club and popular sessions with the 'reading dog' are all used well to help ensure that reading is frequent and fun. Pupils who read to inspectors did so with fluency, although the most able pupils sometimes lack direction in the development of their next-step reading skills.
- The development of mathematical reasoning is improving pupils' abilities to apply their mathematical skills. In some classes and year groups, notably Year 6, these skills are well developed to provide challenge for pupils. However, this is not yet consistent throughout the school.
- In lessons, teachers help pupils to clarify their understanding. This helps to ensure that any confusion is quickly identified and resolved. However, teachers do not consistently challenge and extend the thinking of the most able pupils.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. In lessons and around the school, pupils benefit from warm and supportive relationships with the many adults who teach and care for them. Exchanges are good humoured. This helps pupils to feel valued and understood.
- Pupils and parents value the high-quality pastoral care provided by the school. Many of the parents who responded to the Parent View questionnaire highlighted how happy their children are at school. One parent, who encapsulated the views of many, wrote: 'This is a wonderful school with a community feel and a caring balance between achieving and fun and being the best they can be as individuals.'
- There are a wide range of opportunities for pupils to develop the aspirations that will support them in the next stages of their education. For example, pictures of the visits from inspirational speakers line the corridors. Skills are further developed through a wide range of clubs, the forest school and residential experiences such as the Year 5 trip to Grosvenor Hall during the inspection. In these ways, pupils learn effectively about themselves and others.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Generally, pupils are kind and supportive to each other, both in lessons and around the school. On the rare occasions where there are problems, issues are promptly resolved by staff. Parents responding to the Parent View questionnaire commented on how quickly and effectively leaders had responded to the very few incidents of bullying.
- Pupils behave well in lessons. They follow instructions and are keen to answer questions. However, opportunities for pupils to develop independent learning behaviours and extend their thinking are not consistent across the school.
- Attendance is improving. School leaders have ensured that pupils and parents are

aware of the importance of regular school attendance. Pupils enjoy the reward systems and regular celebrations that are in place to reward high levels of attendance. Most groups of pupils attend school regularly. However, for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils, regular school attendance remains a challenge.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- In national assessments at the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2, higher proportions of pupils attained the expected standards for their age in reading, writing and mathematics than proportions of pupils seen nationally.
- The work in the workbooks of current pupils across the school shows that most pupils are working at the standards expected for their ages across the curriculum. This is also reflected in the school's own assessments, which indicate that most pupils are making good progress within year groups from their starting points.
- Disadvantaged pupils are attaining at similar levels to other pupils across the curriculum. Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are making good progress from their starting points, both across the curriculum and in reaching non-curriculum-based targets. While Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils are not attaining as well as other pupils, they are making good progress from their starting points.
- In 2017, a lower proportion of Year 1 pupils attained the expected standard in the phonics screening check than that seen nationally. Following effective action from school leaders, current pupils are making good progress from their starting points. This is because phonics is taught systematically and pupils are given regular opportunities to apply their phonetic understanding to their reading and writing.
- In the 2017 national assessments, lower proportions of pupils attained the higher standards in key stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics than those seen nationally. At the end of key stage 2, the most able pupils had made less progress than other pupils and most-able pupils nationally in reading and mathematics.
- The work in the workbooks of current most-able pupils shows variable progress and attainment. Often, the work that the most able pupils are set is completed with ease. Work does not contain the systematic challenge that these pupils need to support them in making good progress from their starting points. In some year groups, notably Year 6, this challenge is more evident, although this is not consistent across the curriculum in other classes and year groups.

## Early years provision

**Good**

- Well-established routines are effective in supporting children in developing early skills and independence. For example, in the morning, children match their names which are written on plastic bricks to another line of plastic bricks with numbers on. They are then encouraged to tell the teacher how many children are in school and show her how to write the number. In this way, early counting skills are developed effectively and meaningfully.
- The environment, both inside and out, is well resourced with attractive opportunities for play, learning and investigation. During the inspection, children were enjoying participating in a wide range of independent activities designed to support early writing

skills, such as labelling and ordering sentences linked to their learning about the job of a fireman.

- Adults in the early years are skilled at clarifying children's understanding and developing their speaking skills. This was seen during the inspection when children were using pictures to order the story of 'The Gingerbread Man' before then using sentences containing positional language to describe the pictures. In this way, early reading, writing and speaking skills are developed well.
- The early years leader has a secure understanding of the strengths of the early years provision and areas for development. She has ensured that all the necessary training and safeguarding checks are in place.
- Parents' contributions to their children's learning journeys are welcomed and celebrated. From home visits to 'wow' learning moments, they are encouraged to make and share observations. In this way, the home-school partnership is effective in supporting children in their early years.
- Children start the early years with skills broadly in line with those typical for their age. They make good progress from their starting points so that a greater proportion of children attain a good level of development than is seen nationally. In this way, children are well prepared for Year 1.

## School details

Unique reference number	135118
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10040705

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	435
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Steve Hemmings
Headteacher	Suzie Hall
Telephone number	01322 663 792
Website	<a href="http://www.hextable-primary.kent.sch.uk/">www.hextable-primary.kent.sch.uk/</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:office@hextable-primary.kent.sch.uk">office@hextable-primary.kent.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	11–12 December 2013

## Information about this school

- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Early years and key stage 1 pupils are in one building, and key stage 2 pupils in another building on the same site. Years 1 and 2 have expanded to three classes, but other year groups contain two classes per year group.
- Most pupils are White British. Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils comprise a significant group within the school population.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is lower than average, although the proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care (EHC) plan is slightly higher than average.



## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors met with staff, governors, parents and leaders. The lead inspector met with a representative from the local authority.
- The headteacher was unwell and not in school during the inspection. Most Year 5 pupils were away on their residential trip.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including development plans, minutes of meetings, and progress information.
- Inspectors observed pupils around the school and in their classes. They met with groups of pupils to get their views on the school and to hear them read.
- They met with parents on the playground and considered 111 responses to the Ofsted questionnaire, Parent View, including 110 free-text responses. The lead inspector also read two letters from parents.

## Inspection team

Deborah Gordon, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Anne Allen	Ofsted Inspector
Chris Donovan	Ofsted Inspector

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