

Hythe Primary School

School Road, Hythe, Southampton, Hampshire SO45 6BL

Inspection dates

5–6 February 2019

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- A period of leadership uncertainty took place following the school's last inspection. This resulted in a slow pace of improvement. Current leaders are reversing this position.
- The quality of teaching and learning is inconsistent across the school. From their starting points into key stages 1 and 2, too many pupils have fallen behind with their learning and need to catch up.
- Progress in mathematics in key stage 2 has been weak. New approaches to help pupils develop their fluency and understanding are not fully in place.
- Learning activities are not consistently well matched to meet pupils' learning needs from their different starting points. Teaching does not make enough use of assessment information to support all pupils' next steps in learning.
- Pupils' skills in spelling and grammar are not developed quickly enough. Teachers do not routinely ensure that basic errors are corrected. This means that pupils' writing is not as strong as it should be.
- Teachers' expectations of pupils' handwriting and presentation are variable.

The school has the following strengths

- The new headteacher has identified actions to raise standards. Leaders have made a successful start to improve pupils' learning and progress in some year groups. They are well placed to move forward with more urgency.
- Governors have taken a strong steer to ensure the school moves forward. They support and challenge senior leaders to ensure that improvement actions gather momentum.
- The curriculum engages pupils well, offering many opportunities to enrich their learning and personal development.
- Pupils behave well and enjoy their learning. Parents and carers say that their children feel safe, and appreciate the school's nurturing ethos.
- Children in early years make good progress. They enjoy learning through well-planned activities, both in the classroom and in the outside environment.
- The school's recent work to improve pupils' phonics and reading skills has resulted in high levels of attainment. Pupils in all year groups enjoy reading and develop a love of literature.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate the pace of implementation of leaders' improvement actions.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, so it is consistently good or better and increases pupils' rates of progress in writing and mathematics, by:
 - ensuring that all teachers match learning activities and tasks to pupils' abilities and needs
 - raising expectations, so that pupils' work is presented to a high standard
 - ensuring that teachers address basic grammar, punctuation and spelling errors at an early stage to strengthen pupils' skills as writers
 - implementing strategies that secure and deepen pupils' understanding of mathematics.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Since the headteacher's substantive appointment in April 2018, she has worked with governors and the staff team to develop an ambitious vision for the school. She has accurately identified the school's strengths and is resolutely tackling the areas for improvement. Staff are fully behind the headteacher's determination.
- The headteacher wisely recognised that there was much to do and quickly implemented strategies to raise standards of achievement. She has prioritised staff training and development. Leaders' professional expertise has grown as a result of high-quality support and training in different aspects of the school's work. Consequently, they are now supporting the necessary improvements.
- The senior leadership team adopted new responsibilities at the start of the current academic year. Middle leaders appreciate the trusting relationships that permeate the school, which give them confidence to lead changes. Supported by local authority advisers, school leaders have introduced new approaches in mathematics and English. Their work has made a positive impact on the quality of teaching and learning in those year groups where there was most need for change.
- Class teachers welcome the feedback that leaders give them about their work because it supports them to develop in their roles. The headteacher has recently implemented a thorough approach that challenges and supports teachers to identify and address gaps in pupils' learning quickly, as and when they occur. This approach has started well in key stage 1.
- The special educational needs coordinator has recently benefited from external expertise to improve the school's provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). She has a detailed understanding of the barriers to learning that individual pupils face. Leaders work with teachers and support staff to make necessary adaptations that support pupils' learning and progress. Their actions are having a particular impact on the current provision for pupils with an education, health and care plan.
- Leaders have an increasing focus on the progress of disadvantaged children. They know them well as individuals, which helps additional funding to be carefully targeted. Senior leaders do not evaluate sharply enough the impact of their additional provision on disadvantaged pupils' outcomes to determine the difference their strategies are making.
- Pupils rightly describe their school as one where 'everyone helps each other'. Strong relationships between staff and pupils make the school a happy place in which to learn. Parents who shared their views with inspectors praised the school's work to develop their children, both personally and academically. Leaders are aware that the school's recent history and resulting changes have had a negative impact on the views of a small group of parents.
- Extra funding for sport and physical education (PE) is used effectively to increase pupils' participation. It has provided coaching sessions, clubs and events for pupils of all ages. The funding has also increased competitive sports in partnership with local

schools.

- Through planned curriculum opportunities, leaders promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils talk with enthusiasm about their learning across many subjects, such as PE, music, computing and religious education. They are interested to learn about other people's beliefs and lives. For example, in their topic on The Titanic, pupils in Years 5 and 6 had the opportunity to reflect on the many lives lost locally from the ship's crew.
- Leaders promote pupils' understanding of equalities strongly and pupils respect difference and diversity. Pupils are proud of their disability-friendly school. During the inspection, key stage 1 pupils enjoyed listening to the visitors who told them about the Chinese New Year. Following their celebration, pupils recalled many interesting facts about Chinese culture.
- Having made a strong start with their improvement actions, leaders recognise the need to implement them with greater rigour and urgency to secure consistent approaches throughout the school.

Governance of the school

- Led by an experienced chair, the governing body has guided the school through a difficult period. Governors strongly support the headteacher's drive to make necessary changes. They recognise that the school is now on an upward trajectory.
- Governors make effective use of the information the headteacher provides to hold the school to account. They have strong systems in place, and they know the school well. Their programme of visits helps them to question leaders about standards of achievement, attendance and the use of pupil premium funding. Governors pay particular attention to ensuring that safeguarding procedures are effective.
- Governors have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. They are justly proud of the school's work to promote pupils' personal development. Governors are rightly ambitious for a greater proportion of pupils to make stronger progress by attaining the higher standards by the time they leave the school.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- All staff place a high priority on keeping pupils safe. Leaders rightly emphasise the need to be vigilant, taking the view that 'anything can happen behind closed doors'. Where there are concerns about a child, designated leaders for safeguarding take appropriate steps. They work in partnership with parents and make timely referrals so that support is quickly put into place. Leaders maintain trusting relationships with other professionals.
- As the school's main designated leader, the headteacher has ensured that all staff are comprehensively trained in line with their level of responsibility. They know how to recognise signs of abuse and how to record concerns diligently using the school's electronic system. All procedures are fit for purpose. Governors fulfil their statutory

responsibilities effectively through a link governor, who makes helpful visits to provide a strategic overview. The school makes thorough checks when recruiting new staff to the school.

- Pupils say that they feel safe in school. They appreciate having 'worry monsters' and boxes where they can place their problems and seek help. Even the very youngest pupils understand what bullying means. They know that it is about hurting others repeatedly and on purpose. They say that it rarely happens, but, if it does, teachers sort things out quickly.
- The curriculum helps pupils to learn how to stay safe in different situations. In line with their age, they develop an increasing understanding of how to stay safe online. As a result of learning about the potential risks when gaming, Year 6 boys reflected sensibly on how one particular game had affected their behaviour. Most of them decided to delete the game from their computer.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching does not consistently meet pupils' needs because learning activities are not well matched to all pupils' abilities and prior attainment. In some classes, teachers use their assessments sharply to provide tasks that precisely meet needs. In other classes, gaps in learning are not addressed with enough rigour.
- Lower-ability pupils sometimes move on too quickly to the next learning activity before they have had enough opportunity to apply their skills and knowledge. This means that, in mathematics, pupils do not develop a strong understanding of concepts. On occasions, the most able pupils do not move quickly enough to work that challenges them to think deeply.
- Teachers often let pupils' errors in basic spellings and grammar go unchallenged, without ensuring that pupils learn from them. Teachers' expectations are not consistently high and pupils' work in their books is poorly presented. Weaknesses in handwriting limit pupils' fluency and mask their mistakes.
- Where teachers have benefited from reading training over time, they support pupils to understand unfamiliar words, so that they can tackle challenging texts. Pupils read widely and can talk about a range of books and authors that they have enjoyed. Pupils' reading and the content of their writing are improving because teachers help pupils to understand and use rich vocabulary content. Teachers are now rightly turning their attention to improving pupils' spelling and handwriting.
- Leaders have supported teachers to strengthen their use of assessment, so that there is an increasingly reliable understanding of pupils' achievement as they move through the school. Assessment is used effectively in Year 6, where teachers know that a number of current pupils have a lot to do to be well equipped for secondary transfer.
- The school's recent focus on improving provision in mathematics is having a positive impact on pupils' learning in some year groups. In key stage 1, pupils are developing quick recall of numbers to support problem-solving. In some classes, pupils learn correct mathematical language that helps them explain their methods.
- Teachers prepare interesting tasks to promote learning in the wider curriculum subjects. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 applied themselves enthusiastically to developing a

code for a computer game. In key stage 1, pupils' eye-catching artwork shows that they have looked carefully at famous painters, such as Kandinsky and Van Gogh.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils demonstrate positive attitudes towards learning and this helps them with their lessons. They work hard and want to achieve. They say that they enjoy the challenges that teachers give them in lessons.
- Pupils trust the adults in school to listen carefully and help them. Pupils feel empowered to talk about difficult personal situations. Parents told inspectors that the school is 'like an extended family' and pupils agree that everyone supports each other well. Older pupils respond well to the responsibilities they are given, such as helping younger pupils at breaktimes and in their learning. Mixed-age groupings for some curriculum activities help pupils to respect each other, irrespective of friendship.
- Pupils benefit from activities that support their social and emotional development. They are particularly positive about the skills they learn through their forest school. Pupils say that this opportunity helps them to reflect and be calm. Recently introduced mindfulness sessions in Years 5 and 6 are an innovative feature of the school's work.
- Teachers and support staff offer skilful guidance to pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs. Pupils with challenging behaviour or with specific anxieties are expertly helped to adapt and manage their feelings.
- Pupils appreciate the many opportunities that the school provides to help them to grow and learn. They are proud of their school, although not enough take sufficient pride in their work across the curriculum.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Inspectors observed pupils' good conduct at all times of the school day and throughout the school. At times when teachers needed to give a reminder about how to behave, pupils responded to it promptly and positively.
- Pupils move sensibly and safely at transition times and they are ready to learn at the start of lessons. Pupils speak politely to adults and to each other.
- Pupils behave well on the playground and are considerate of others. Very few behavioural incidents occur, but where they do, adults manage them effectively and leaders ensure that strategies are put in place to minimise any recurrence. As a result, exclusions have declined and are rarely used.
- Following a dip in 2017/18, attendance is improving and fewer pupils now cause concern due to their persistent absence. The current position suggests a rising trend, although leaders know they need to maintain a close check.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- In 2018, pupils' attainment at the end of key stage 2 in the combined subjects of reading, writing and mathematics was in line with the national average. However, it was below the national average in mathematics and in grammar, punctuation and spelling. Key stage 1 pupils' attainment declined in reading and mathematics to be just below the national average.
- Following a sharp decline in 2017 in the proportion of pupils that reached the expected threshold in the Year 1 phonics screening check, improvements to provision meant that almost all pupils met the expected threshold in 2018. Current cohorts are also making strong progress in phonics.
- Disadvantaged pupils' progress improved in reading and writing in 2018, but declined in mathematics. Current disadvantaged pupils are making progress in line with other pupils from the same starting points. Some are achieving well, but others are falling behind with their learning. In recent years, very few disadvantaged pupils have reached the higher standard in any subject. Currently, the most able disadvantaged pupils are deepening their learning. The outcomes of individual pupils with SEND have been similarly inconsistent, with some pupils making good progress, but by no means all.
- Observations of learning and pupils' workbooks show that current pupils' progress remains variable, especially in mathematics and the technical aspects of writing. Extra teaching input is helping to identify pupils who need to catch up in specific aspects of their learning. However, pupils' progress is too often limited by prior weaknesses in basic skills.
- School-level information indicates that the end-of-key-stage attainment is expected to improve in 2019, to meet leaders' ambitious targets. This will depend on current strategies successfully supporting pupils to increase their current rates of progress to meet the standard.
- Pupils enjoy learning across a broad range of subjects and teachers check that pupils understand the content that is set for their year group. When pupils write in subjects other than English and mathematics, the quality of their work is not as effective as it is in those subjects.

Early years provision

Good

- Children in the Reception classes make strong progress. Teachers place a high priority on equipping children with good skills and knowledge, including in reading, writing and number. Teachers provide children with a wide range of activities, so that they can apply their skills in their child-initiated learning. Well-planned activities capture children's interest and spark their enthusiasm for learning.
- Children join Reception with achievement that is broadly typical for their age and, by the time they leave, the proportion of children who reach a good level of development is higher than the national average. In recent years, no children have exceeded that level.

- Parents told inspectors that their children settle quickly into school. Parents play an important role in listening to their children read at home and recording their achievements.
- The early years leader has a good understanding of the early years curriculum. She has successfully led the school's recent enhancements to the outdoor area. Children clearly enjoy the new mud kitchen, as well as the quiet corners that support reading. Both indoors and outdoors, children demonstrated how independent they have become since starting school.
- Children behave well because they learn to cooperate, take turns and, when the need arises, to wait patiently. This helps them to develop good social skills. Children learn to concentrate on their learning, and they listen carefully to what the adults are saying and readily talk about their ideas.
- Adults supervise children carefully, both indoors and outdoors. They are alert to the particular safeguarding and safety needs of early years children. Right from the start, children learn how to use tools and equipment safely, and they learn how to be safe when using computers.
- Teachers and other adults know each child well and they match learning effectively to meet needs. They place a high importance on the areas of learning that children most need to practise, such as reading and writing, and to develop their fine motor skills. Disadvantaged children make good progress and have extra teaching and support where needed. They are helped to overcome barriers to learning, such as by practising phonics and linking this with reading and writing.
- Adults' questioning supports children to think deeply about their choices and reasons. Children practise using numbers through effective questions. When children counted the pretend 'caterpillar' segments that they were cutting, they responded readily to the adult who asked them 'how many more?' A small group confidently arranged socks on a washing line from shortest to longest. On occasion, adults settled for one-word responses from children rather than extending their thinking.

School details

Unique reference number	115916
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	10084356

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	311
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Nicola Hopkins
Headteacher	Charlotte Peppard
Telephone number	023 8084 3206
Website	www.hytheprimaryschool-hants.co.uk
Email address	adminoffice@hythe.hants.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	21–22 January 2015

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Since the last inspection, there has been some turbulence at senior leadership level. The new headteacher was appointed in April 2018, stepping up from her previous position as deputy headteacher. The new deputy headteacher was appointed in June 2018, stepping up from her previous role in the school.
- Although it has recently reduced, the percentage of pupils who are eligible for SEN support is higher than in other schools nationally. The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan is also greater than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language or who are from minority ethnic backgrounds is much lower than that found nationally. The percentage of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is lower than the national average.
- The school provides a breakfast club that is run by the governing body.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching, learning and assessment in all classes, covering a range of subjects. They also undertook learning walks, making further brief classroom visits to look at specific aspects of the school's work. Almost all the observations were conducted jointly with a senior leader.
- Supported by senior leaders, inspectors looked at pupils' work in English and mathematics, and in the broader curriculum subjects.
- Inspectors looked at documentation, including policies, the school's improvement plan, and self-evaluation document, minutes of governing body meetings and their visit reports, and attendance and behaviour information. They discussed anonymised safeguarding information.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, all senior leaders and a mixed group of staff. The lead inspector also met with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors, and spoke by telephone to a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during break and at lunchtime. They visited the breakfast club and attended an assembly.
- Inspectors met pupils, both formally and informally, to discuss their learning, behaviour and aspects of school life.
- Inspectors spoke with parents in the playground before school. Inspectors also took account of the 76 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's parental questionnaire, which included 52 freetext comments, and 17 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Linda Jacobs, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Doug Brawley	Ofsted Inspector
Bruce Waelend	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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