

Inspection of Halstead Community Primary School

Otford Lane, Halstead, Sevenoaks, Kent TN14 7EA

Inspection dates: 26–27 November 2019

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Good

Overall effectiveness at previous
inspection

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are very positive about their school. They feel valued and listened to by the adults. Most pupils are confident that, if they have any worries, they will get the support they need. This includes 'Maple Time', for example: special time with the school's therapy dog.

At breaktimes, pupils play together happily. Pupils say that any unkind behaviour is dealt with quickly by the adults in the school. One pupil said: 'There is never any bullying in the school. If there was it would be sorted out immediately.'

Pupils understand that it is important to treat one another with respect. They work well together. The school motto is 'Everybody different, everybody equal'. One pupil explained: 'This means that, even though we are not all the same, we should still treat one another fairly and equally.'

Leaders help pupils to develop into enthusiastic learners. Topics are planned to engage pupils' interests, and these include visitors, theme days and trips. However, over time, pupils do not learn as much as they should. This stems from leaders not yet mapping out clearly what pupils will learn.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders have taken a thoughtful approach to reviewing the curriculum. Their work has begun to have a positive impact. Developments are heading in the right direction. However, although leaders have begun to make improvements, aspects of leadership and management are not fully effective.

Leaders intend pupils to experience a well-planned, challenging curriculum. For example, pupils' mathematics learning is designed to make sure that pupils build on what they already know and can do. Pupils benefit from lots of opportunities to solve mathematical problems. They are expected to justify their answers with reasons, applying their earlier learning. One pupil said: 'My teacher challenges me ... a lot!'

Leaders have strengthened the teaching of phonics. This has been thought through carefully. Children get off to a good start in early years. Teachers plan interesting activities where children learn and practise their phonics. In Year 1, pupils continue to strengthen this knowledge, reading unknown words confidently. As pupils move into key stage 2, they further develop key reading skills. Any pupils falling behind are supported well to catch up, through daily reading sessions.

Teachers show their love of reading through the well-chosen books they share with classes. Pupils are keen to read these books as part of the school's '100 books' reading challenge.

Leaders ensure that the curriculum includes a suitable range of subjects. They have more work to do to, because plans and teachers' subject knowledge are not as well developed in all subjects as in mathematics and reading. In subjects such as writing, history and physical education, curriculum plans are not yet well developed. Plans lack clarity about the end points pupils should reach in the schools chosen 'topics', or overall. Plans are not clear about what pupils should learn and when. They do not ensure that pupils build knowledge sequentially, ready for future learning.

Teachers adapt the curriculum well for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Well-trained staff support these pupils. The SEND leader oversees class support effectively, ensuring that pupils with SEND can experience success across the curriculum.

Children do well in the early years. Leaders have established a carefully planned early years curriculum. Teachers have created a calm, purposeful learning environment, including out of doors. For example, during the inspection, children were seen enjoying building their own den and planting their own vegetables. Experiences such as these help the children to develop key skills across the curriculum. Children play and learn together well.

Pupils are well behaved around the school. Lessons are rarely disrupted by poor behaviour. The majority of pupils arrive at the school on time. Effective action to tackle previously poor attendance includes a helpful weekly reward system.

Leaders prioritise pupils' personal development well. Pupils have the opportunity to learn about different cultures. Pupils understand that people hold different beliefs and that it is important to respect people's differences. Teachers also plan events, such as science and mathematics days, to raise pupils' aspirations. During these events, pupils are introduced to people who work in a wide range of different careers.

Governors have not been effective enough in holding leaders sufficiently to account for improvement in pupils' learning. Recent changes to the governing body have resulted in more accurate information being used to challenge leaders. The new governing body is working with the local authority to develop its roles and responsibilities.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make sure that pupils are kept safe and are well cared for. Pupils trust staff and are comfortable to raise a concern with them. Staff teach pupils how to keep themselves safe, including when using the internet.

Leaders make sure that all staff receive regular training to know the signs that might raise concerns about a pupil's welfare. Adults know what to do if they have concerns about a pupil's well-being. Leaders record these concerns carefully and work with

other organisations when this is relevant.

Governors check that school safeguarding procedures are being applied.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The content of some subjects is not as carefully sequenced as necessary, to ensure pupils securely gain the knowledge and skills required for future learning. This is particularly true in writing and in some of the foundation subjects, such as history and physical education, for example. The plans in these subjects do not support teachers to build pupils' knowledge sequentially. Leaders need to ensure that the content of all subject plans is well chosen, carefully sequenced and delivered as intended, so that all pupils achieve well year on year.
- Leaders should ensure that staff develop the subject knowledge and skills required to develop and deliver the different subjects of the curriculum, including for the assessment of pupils' learning, so that any gaps in provision or pupils' learning are swiftly identified and closed.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you're not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	118274
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10111219
Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation School
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	79
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Melissa Gilbert
Headteacher	Leslie Hawkins
Website	www.halstead.kent.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	3–4 March 2016

Information about this school

- There has been a change to the membership of the governing body since the last inspection.
- This school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Most of the pupils are of White British heritage. Other pupils come from a range of different ethnic heritages including Traveller, Black Caribbean and Indian.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium is above average. The pupil premium is additional government funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs or disability is above average.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- We visited classes across the whole school.
- We met with subject leaders, looked at pupils' work, spoke with teachers, spoke with pupils about their work and read with some of the pupils.
- We observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school, including at playtimes and lunchtimes. We also spoke with a range of different staff about pupils' behaviour. We spoke with pupils, both formally and informally, to gather their opinions about the school.
- We held meetings with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and other staff. The lead inspector met with members of the governing body and spoke with a representative of the local authority. Discussions explored a wide range of subjects, including safeguarding arrangements.
- We scrutinised a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans and records of monitoring. Safeguarding documents (including the single central record) were also evaluated, along with information relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- We spoke with parents and carers at the start of the day. Account was taken of the views of 31 parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire Parent View, and the seven responses to the staff survey and 29 responses to the pupil questionnaire.
- We did deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, science and PE. Joint lesson visits, discussions with teachers and pupils and a review of pupils' work with leaders contributed towards the evaluation of the quality of education in the school.

Inspection team

Jo Lakey, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Sean McKeown

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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