

Headcorn Primary School

Kings Road, Headcorn, Ashford, Kent, TN27 9QT

Inspection dates 19–20 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Children make an excellent start in Reception because they experience a good range of opportunities in all aspects of their learning.
- In Key Stage 1 pupils make good progress and achieve well, particularly in reading and writing where standards are above the national average for their age.
- Achievement has improved in Key Stage 2. Pupils make good progress and are on course to reach improved standards by the end of Year 6.
- The quality of teaching is good and some is outstanding. Teachers are especially skilled in using questioning to support pupils in their learning and to deepen their understanding.
- Behaviour is good and pupils feel safe in school. They participate enthusiastically in all their activities and work well together. They talk confidently about their learning.
- The headteacher and leaders check the school's performance closely, and the progress of all groups of pupils has improved since the previous inspection.
- Governance is strong. The governing body has a good understanding of the school's effectiveness and is fully involved in moving the school forward.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to practise their numeracy skills in other subjects or to apply them to solving problems.
- When marking pupils' work, teachers do not regularly use pupils' learning targets to show how they can improve.
- Teachers do not always adjust tasks so that pupils of average ability are consistently well challenged.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 14 lessons, one of which was a joint lesson observation with the headteacher. Additional support groups were also seen. Inspectors listened to pupils read and looked at pupils' work in their exercise books.
- Inspectors met with pupils and talked with them about their work. Meetings were also held with subject leaders, governors and a representative of the local authority.
- Documentation covering safeguarding, the management of performance of staff, records of behaviour and safety, attendance and checks on pupils' attainment and progress were reviewed.
- Inspectors took account of 42 responses from parents and carers to the online questionnaire (Parent View), and seven questionnaires from staff. An inspector also talked to parents and carers informally during the inspection.

Inspection team

Howard Jones, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Carol Vant

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller-than-average-sized primary school.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, there is one Reception class.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils receiving support from pupil premium funding, which is the extra government support for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, looked-after children and those from service families, is below average. In this school it relates to pupils who are known to qualify for free school meals.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs at school action, school action plus, or who have a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching to further improve achievement, by ensuring that:
 - pupils have a range of opportunities to apply their numeracy skills to solve real-life problems and to practise them in other subjects
 - teachers' marking consistently provides guidance for pupils on how they can improve their learning and progress to the next level
 - pupils of average ability move to more challenging work once they show they understand what is being taught.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- The majority of children enter Reception with skills and knowledge broadly in line with those expected for their age. Because of the range of exciting activities and the strong focus on communication and language, children make good progress and enter Year 1 well prepared as strong, confident learners.
- Progress in Key Stage 1 is good. In 2012, the Year 1 phonics screening check (linking letters and sounds) showed that pupils' achievement was well above the national average. Pupils enjoy reading and by the end of Year 2 a good proportion of pupils go on to attain the higher levels in national tests. Writing is also a strength and attainment is high compared to national standards.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress. Their needs are accurately identified and both teachers and support staff use a range of approaches which help them become independent and enjoy success as they learn alongside their classmates.
- Most pupils reached national expectations by the end of Year 6 in 2012. A number of pupils exceeded expectations, although attainment was higher in English than in mathematics. Pupils supported through the pupil premium did well in English. They were ahead of their peers by as much as four months but did not attain standards similar to other pupils in mathematics, where they were behind by four months. Inspection evidence shows this gap is now closing.
- The progress of current pupils is good for all year groups in Key Stage 2. Pupils are making better progress because of improvements in the quality of teaching. Pupils are now making good gains in their learning, and increasing numbers are on track to exceed national expectations for their age by the end of Year 6.
- Pupils develop their numeracy skills well in mathematics lessons. However, they do not have sufficient opportunities to practise these skills in other subjects or to apply them to solve real-life problems and further accelerate their progress. The school has accurately identified this as a priority for development.

The quality of teaching is good

- The headteacher has effectively ensured the quality of teaching has improved, so that it is now consistently good with some outstanding practice. Because of this, pupils now make good progress in all year groups with marked improvements in Key Stage 2.
- Adults in Reception effectively use every opportunity to promote children's development. For example, following a visit of a clown they promoted children's learning of number and shape through imaginative role-play activities, which also enhanced the children's social skills.
- Teachers are skilled at asking questions. These serve to ensure pupils think about their learning and deepen their knowledge and understanding. This was seen in a Year 3 lesson where, following an educational visit the previous day, pupils were effectively challenged to use key words and apply their literacy skills to recall their visit.
- Additional adults provide good support tailored to pupils' individual needs. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs have equal opportunities to become successful, for example through additional drama therapy, and through reading and writing activities.
- Teachers consistently show pupils how to be successful in their learning. They explain clearly what they need to do and link this to previous learning. They provide opportunities for pupils to talk about their activities and review each other's work. However, when marking pupils' work teachers do not regularly use pupils' learning targets to show how they can improve.
- Planning is a key strength and work is well matched to pupils' abilities. For example, in a Year 2 lesson, pupils were set well-chosen tasks so that they could confidently develop their use of handling data. However, teachers do not always adjust tasks so that pupils of average ability move to more challenging work once they show they understand what is being taught.
- Pupils learn well when they work together to solve problems. This was seen in a Year 6

mathematics session in which pupils had to apply their team-working skills. They rose to the challenge, and this was evident in their animated conversations. However, pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to practise their numeracy skills in other subjects or to apply them to solve real-life problems.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils behave well during all times of the school day. They are welcoming and well mannered and enjoy sharing in the activities available to them during breaks and lunchtimes. Movement around the school is calm, and during assemblies, pupils' behaviour is well suited to such large occasions. They listen attentively for sustained periods of time.
- Pupils are enthusiastic in their learning and behaviour is good in lessons. They are eager to share their ideas or talk about their learning. Children in Reception are equally purposeful and fully involved in their activities. However, across the school, more exemplary learning is less evident because opportunities for pupils to engage in solving problems are not regularly planned.
- Pupils have a clear understanding of what bullying is and treat each other as equals. They are confident they know how to use the internet safely and say there is no cyber bullying. As a result, pupils say they feel safe and, should they have any concerns, are positive adults will always listen and help. Incidents of racism are rare and behaviour over time is good.
- Parents and carers say their children are happy. The overwhelming majority of parents and carers who responded to the online questionnaire (Parent View) agree with this and that their children are safe and well looked after.
- Attendance is above average and pupils are punctual. The school day gets off to a prompt start because of this. Pupils want to come to school and this is also reflected in the positive and secure relationships seen between pupils and staff.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher's highly focused approach has ensured the school has improved. Since the previous inspection, her effective leadership has led to improvements in the quality of teaching. She has developed a strong team of leaders who, along with a committed staff, share her high expectations and work effectively together for the good of all pupils.
- The quality of teaching has improved rapidly. Weaker teaching has been addressed and as a result, previous underachievement has been tackled and pupils' progress is now good.
- Checks on how well teachers are doing are clearly linked to pupils' achievement. Teachers' individual targets are linked to improving pupils' progress, so that teachers are held to account and any underachievement is addressed quickly. Career and pay progression relate closely to improving outcomes for pupils.
- Teachers' professional development is effective in improving their classroom practice. Staff say they value these opportunities to develop their skills. There are regular opportunities for teachers to observe their colleagues so that good practice is shared. The Early Years Foundation Stage is highly regarded and used by other local schools as an example of good provision.
- The local authority has been key to supporting the school in raising the quality of teaching. Its support and the expertise of the headteacher have been effective in providing a clear focus on what constitutes good progress. The school demonstrates strong capacity to sustain the pace of improvements.
- The school cares for all pupils so that they have equal opportunity to become successful. Discrimination is not tolerated. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs and those who require extra support do well. The pupil premium funding is also used in targeted ways, so that the pupils concerned make progress equal to that of their classmates and gaps in their attainment are closing.
- The subjects taught effectively develop pupils' knowledge and understanding. Pupils use their

literacy skills across different subjects. Although the school plans focus weeks on mathematics, more regular opportunities for pupils to use and apply their numeracy skills are not as consistent. Pupils' work is celebrated in the colourful displays around the school. Pupils are encouraged to use their skills in modern foreign languages within their everyday learning.

- Pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is promoted extensively across the school and they happily take on responsibilities. Educational visits to museums and to Parliament are used especially well to enhance pupils' understanding of past events and social developments. They also explore the features of other cultures, for example those of countries in Africa.
- Safeguarding arrangements fully meet requirements and the school ensures pupils are kept safe.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body provides effective support for the school. The Chair of the Governing Body, along with other governors, knows about the school's strengths and particular aspects which require further development to enhance provision for pupils. The governors have been fully supportive of the headteacher in raising the quality of teaching, while providing appropriate challenge to secure improvements elsewhere. They closely monitor the headteacher's performance. They continue to keep themselves up to date with new initiatives relating to their role and competently use data to compare their school's performance with others nationally. They check how the pupil premium funds are being spent and assess how additional approaches to support pupils' reading and writing are leading to improved outcomes for these pupils. Governors know what is being done to reward good teaching and tackle underperformance, and how this is linked to teachers' salary progression and promotion. They do not tolerate discrimination and are keen that all pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, become successful in their learning.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	118291
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	401737

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	193
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jack Keeler
Headteacher	Julie Barker
Date of previous school inspection	2–3 February 2010
Telephone number	01622 891289
Fax number	01622 891285
Email address	headteacher@headcorn.kent.sch.uk

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