

# Highcliffe St Mark Primary School

Greenways, Highcliffe, Dorset, BH23 5AZ

**Inspection dates** 6–7 November 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
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.

- School leaders, including governors, have maintained a good quality of education for pupils since the last inspection while managing the challenges of increasing the size of the school.
- Pupils work hard and they achieve well across the school. They make good progress in reading and writing and by the end of Year 6 their attainment is significantly above average.
- The quality of teaching is good with some that is outstanding. Teachers are enthusiastic and provide lessons that are lively and engaging and inspire pupils to learn.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They feel safe because they know that adults care for them. They get on well together and show courtesy and respect towards each other and adults.
- All pupils are fully included in what the school provides. A small number of pupils with physical difficulties are well supported by skilled teaching assistants so they play a full part in school life.
- Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The Reception classes are well resourced and provide a stimulating environment for children.
- School leaders have maintained the quality of teaching to ensure that all pupils make good progress. They make sure that the curriculum is well planned to provide enriching experiences for pupils.
- School leaders, including governors, have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school demonstrating that they have the capacity to improve further.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- Although pupils' achievement in mathematics is improving, they do not make as much progress in mathematics as they do in reading and writing.
- Teaching is not outstanding because not all teachers provide enough challenge to pupils in lessons or when marking their books and so pupils do not always make as much progress as they should.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 18 lessons or part lessons, several of which were observed jointly with senior leaders. Additionally, inspectors also made several short visits to lessons. They watched three school assemblies.
- Inspectors listened to pupils from Years 2, 3 and 6 read and they looked at work in their books. They held meetings with two groups of pupils and they talked with them informally in lessons and around the school.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, five governors and a representative from the local authority.
- Among the documents scrutinised were school development plans, pupils' assessment information and records relating to pupils' behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- Inspectors considered the responses of 55 parents and carers to the online survey Parent View. They also spoke to a small number of parents and carers informally at the start of the school day. Inspectors took account of the 34 responses to the staff questionnaire.

## Inspection team

Joy Considine, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Victor Chaffey

Additional Inspector

Janet Simms

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is much larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is broadly average and the proportion of those supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding is below average. In this school, the funding supports those pupils who are eligible for free school meals or who are looked after by the local authority.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Since the previous inspection, the school has expanded in size to become a three-form entry primary school. An increasing number of pupils are admitted to the school part-way through the year.
- School leaders are overseeing a significant building project to accommodate the rise in pupil numbers.
- There has been a considerable change to the teaching team, including senior leaders, since the previous inspection.
- The school provides out-of-school care for pupils at the start and the end of the school day.

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

- Increase the proportion of teaching that is outstanding by:
  - demanding more of pupils in lessons through asking questions that make them work harder
  - providing more guidance to pupils so that they are clear about what they need to do to improve the quality of their work.
- Raise pupils' achievement in mathematics by:
  - providing more opportunities for pupils to solve problems
  - encouraging pupils to record their work independently by reducing the number of photocopied worksheets
  - ensuring that pupils have more time to do more work in lessons and to a high standard.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Following a dip in pupils' achievement in 2011, school leaders quickly took action to reverse the decline. Pupils now make good progress in reading and writing and by the end of Year 6 in 2013, their attainment was significantly above average. Pupils' rates of progress in mathematics are increasing; their attainment is improving and is now broadly average.
- Pupils eligible for the pupil premium funding achieve in line with other pupils in reading, writing and mathematics. Their progress is carefully checked and the additional funding is used to provide additional support as well as educational resources to help them.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make progress in line with their classmates. This is because they receive good support from highly skilled teaching assistants. This takes place in class or in small groups where they are provided with specific activities that are well tailored to their individual learning needs.
- Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Staff have created a delightful environment in which children can learn, play and explore both inside and outdoors. They achieve particularly well in communication, reading and writing, which prepares them well for Year 1.
- Across the school pupils enjoy reading a variety of books for pleasure. By the end of Year 2, they use letters and sounds (phonics) to read unfamiliar words and they use punctuation effectively to read fluently. Pupils in Year 6 say they love reading because, 'It lets you get inside someone else's head to see what they are thinking.'
- Although their work is occasionally untidy, pupils' enjoy writing and have reached high standards. This is partly because they write frequently and partly because writing is taught well across the school. By the end of Year 6, pupils choose words carefully to express their thoughts and ideas and they structure their writing very effectively to engage the interest of the reader.
- Pupils' mathematical skills are weaker than those in other subjects. Although they develop basic number skills there are too few opportunities for them to use these to solve complex problems. In a few classes, teachers' expectations are too low; they provide too many photocopied worksheets which restrict the amount of work that pupils can do and these discourage pupils from working as hard as they are capable of.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Most teaching over time is consistently good with an increasing proportion that is outstanding. This is because leaders have a relentless focus on improving the quality of teaching through a structured programme of professional development.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught well. There is a good balance of activities that children select for themselves and more structured learning led by adults. In a phonics session, the teacher provided several activities matching the shape and the sound of the letter 'o' and this helped children to identify this sound in other words.
- Most teachers use assessment information to plan lessons that are closely matched to the learning needs of pupils. This enables them all, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, to make good and sometimes outstanding progress.
- Most teachers use imaginative methods to capture pupils' interest. For example, in a Year 4 writing lesson pupils were learning how to write a set of instructions. The teacher showed pupils how to make a cheese sandwich discussing each stage step by step. This helped pupils to make outstanding progress because they could clearly see and explain the importance of clarity and correct order when composing their own instructions.
- A strong feature seen in most lessons is the quality of relationships between adults and pupils. Pupils behave well because they enjoy learning. Although most teachers use questions effectively to check what pupils know, they do not always use them as effectively to add

challenge and deepen pupils' understanding further. There are plenty of opportunities for pupils to share their ideas and to discuss their learning and this contributes well to their social and moral development.

- The pace of lessons is usually brisk with little time wasted. Teachers have good subject knowledge and they use this well to move learning forward at a rapid pace. This was seen in a Year 5 science lesson in which pupils were learning about the properties of solids, liquids and gases. The teacher extended pupils' learning by demonstrating different structures of these elements through role play in which pupils tightly linked arms to illustrate tight forces in solids, held hands to illustrate looser forces in liquids and touched fingertips to illustrate very light forces in gasses
- Most teachers mark pupils' work thoroughly by providing detailed comments about what they have done well. However, occasionally these comments are too generous and they provide too little guidance about how pupils can improve the quality of their work. Consequently, the presentation of pupils' work is not as good as it should be and pupils often repeat the same mistakes.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- Pupils enjoy school and they feel safe because they know that adults care for them. They have very positive attitudes to learning and they are keen to do well.
- Pupils understand and respond to the school's high expectations for their behaviour. They typically behave well in lessons and when moving around the school. They are friendly and courteous to each other and to adults. Just occasionally, if the pace of the lesson slows they do get a bit fidgety and start to chat among themselves.
- Pupils get on well together regardless of background. They show respect towards the feelings of others and show care and sensitivity towards those pupils who have physical difficulties and ensure that they are not left out of any activities. This reflects the school's promotion of inclusion and helps to foster good relationships.
- Pupils know about different forms of bullying such as cyber bullying and that related to race and gender but they are adamant that it rarely occurs. They say staff are always on hand to resolve the very few incidents that occasionally arise. They are aware of the need to keep themselves safe from dangers outside school such as those associated with tobacco and alcohol.
- Staff have worked hard to improve pupils' attendance but despite this there is still a small number of families who do not ensure that their children attend school regularly and on time. Consequently attendance is broadly average.
- Parents and carers, staff and governors strongly agree that pupils' behaviour is good and that children are safe and happy at school.

### **The leadership and management are good**

- School leaders have successfully managed the challenges of increasing the size of the school and ensuring that staff new to the school are well prepared for their responsibilities while, at the same time, providing a good quality of education for pupils. They acted quickly to address a dip in standards in 2011 and this is reflected in pupils' current good achievement.
- School leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They rigorously analyse performance information to plan further improvements though this has yet to address the inconsistencies that remain in the quality of teaching between classes and subjects. They respond well to the 'light touch' support provided by the local authority.
- Leaders, including middle and subject leaders, are ambitious and they are aware that there are still some aspects of teaching that need to be addressed. Actions to raise achievement in mathematics have been put into place but it is still too early for these to show improvements. As a result leadership and management are good and not outstanding.

- Arrangements for the management of staff performance are robust. Staff have challenging targets linked to pupils' progress and they understand that only the best teaching is rewarded. Senior leaders check on the quality of teaching through formally observing lessons and occasionally 'dropping in' to lessons unannounced.
- The school prides itself on being a learning community in which there are high expectations for pupils and staff. The rigorous programme of professional development helps staff to improve their skills and expertise. Good practice is shared and the best teachers act as coaches to less experienced staff. The headteacher provides support to other schools within the local authority.
- The curriculum provides exciting experiences for pupils while ensuring that reading, writing and mathematics are taught effectively. The school grounds provide opportunities for outdoor learning including the establishment of an archaeological site in which pupils' dig for historical artefacts. This makes a good contribution to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The quality of sports is very high with a wide range of activities to keep pupils fit and healthy. Primary school sports funding is used to access additional support from a local high school to provide staff training delivered by qualified coaches and trainers.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors know the school's strengths and what needs to improve further. They play an active role in working alongside school leaders and they visit the school regularly. They are provided with good quality information which they use to check the school's effectiveness and challenge school leaders. Governors know about the quality of teaching and how well pupils achieve in relation to other schools. Statutory requirements, including those for safeguarding, are effectively in place. Governors are clear on the management of teachers' performance and the implementation of the national Teachers' Standards in relation to tackling underperformance and what the school is doing to reward the best teaching.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	134987
<b>Local authority</b>	Dorset
<b>Inspection number</b>	426848

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Foundation
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	501
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Angela Budd
<b>Headteacher</b>	Karen Boynton
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	10 November 2013
<b>Telephone number</b>	01425 273029
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