

Hilltop Primary School

Ditchling Hill, Southgate West, Crawley, RH11 8QL

Inspection dates

18–19 June 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils	Good		2
Quality of teaching	Good		2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Outstanding		1
Leadership and management	Good		2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils throughout the academy make good progress and reach at least average standards by the end of Key Stage 2 from very low starting points.
- Children make a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage and, as a result, they are well prepared for their future education.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress in early reading and speaking skills. This gives them a firm foundation for learning in all subjects.
- The quality of teaching is good and some is outstanding. Activities are planned well. A wide variety of methods is used to capture pupils' interests and make learning interesting.
- Pupils' outstanding behaviour, both in and outside lessons, and their highly positive attitudes to school underpin their good achievement. They feel entirely safe in the academy and take very good care of each other.
- Very effective management of teaching and learning has brought rapid improvement to the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.
- The headteacher and senior leadership team provide clear, enthusiastic and determined leadership. They are well supported by a good governing body and a staff team who all have the highest expectations of themselves and their pupils.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is not enough outstanding teaching to enable pupils to make outstanding progress.
- On occasion, pupils, particularly the more able, do not move on quickly enough to the next challenging steps in their learning.
- The use of marking and feedback does not always ensure pupils speedily improve their own work.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 24 lessons or parts of lessons, including lessons observed jointly with the headteacher and members of the senior leadership team. The inspectors also made a number of shorter visits to classrooms, looked at pupils' work and listened to pupils reading.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher and senior leadership team, groups of pupils, the Acting Chair of the Governing Body, a representative of the academy trust and members of staff, including other leaders with particular responsibilities.
- Inspectors took account of 38 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire (Parent View) and had several discussions with parents.
- Inspectors observed the academy's work and looked at a range of documents, including information on pupils' current progress, the academy's plans for improvement, the management of teachers' performance, and documentation and records relating to pupils' behaviour and safety. Inspectors also looked at the use of pupil premium funding. This is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, and those children who are looked after by the local authority

Inspection team

Christine Jones, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Peter Lacey-Hastings

Additional Inspector

Gianni Bianchi

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The academy is larger than the average-sized primary school and is still growing.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported by school action is above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium funding is just below average.
- The proportion of pupils who are of minority ethnic heritage is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is also above average.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- Hilltop Primary School became an academy on 1st September 2012. When its predecessor school, Hilltop Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be satisfactory overall.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' achievement along with the quality of teaching so that both are outstanding by:
 - making rigorous use of marking and feedback to help pupils rapidly improve their own work
 - ensuring that pupils, particularly those who are more able, move promptly on to more challenging tasks.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Children start in the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills which are well below those typical for their age. They make good progress in all areas of learning. In particular, the early stages of reading and numeracy are quickly established and provide a strong basis for later learning. Children are inquisitive, work well together and are keen to learn.
- Good progress continues in Years 1 and 2. The proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the Year 1 phonic (letters and sounds) screening test was above average in 2013, a big improvement from 2012. This means that pupils read confidently by the end of Year 2. They read regularly at home and at school, enjoy books and achieve well. Standards in reading are improving.
- Standards in writing and mathematics also show a rising trend over time at the end of Year 2. Pupils' current work continues to show good progress and teacher assessments indicate a further improvement in standards.
- Pupils through the rest of the academy make good progress overall, including those from minority ethnic backgrounds. Standards are in line with national averages by the time pupils leave in Year 6. This is reflected in the results of national tests, which show a rising trend for reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils supported by additional funding, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, achieve well and make at least good progress. In 2013, the standards attained in national tests for English and mathematics in Year 6 for these pupils were just above those of other pupils.
- The most able pupils do not always achieve as well they could, something of which the teachers are acutely aware. These pupils take good responsibility for organising and managing their own work but are not always encouraged to move on to more challenging tasks quickly enough. They readily try to combine and apply key skills in writing and mathematics, for example in exploring new and more challenging vocabulary in numeracy, including 'intersection' and 'vertex'.
- Pupils who are at an early stage of learning to speak English as an additional language make good progress. They often make rapid progress in establishing good reading skills and building their spoken and written vocabulary through well-planned and interesting themes.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs achieve well. The academy takes careful account of their achievement in planning the support they need and encouraging them to make decisions and take a pride in their work.
- Pupils read widely and often, both in lessons and outside. The library is a popular place where many pupils take every opportunity to sit and read their favourite books.
- Many pupils love writing, especially where they can be creative. For example, in one class, a boy was desperate to get on with his story about being a fish going over a waterfall.

The quality of teaching

is good

- The quality of teaching throughout the academy has improved at a rapid pace because of the positive ways that teachers have responded to the high expectation set by senior leaders. As a result, teaching is generally good with some that is outstanding.
- Pupils are ambitious and generally aim high. This is the result of teachers' clearly stated high expectations for all pupils. They effectively promote pupils' learning skills and this boosts the achievement of all groups of pupils, including some of the most able and those who find learning difficult.
- Pupils are generally orderly and systematic in their work because classrooms are well organised and attractive resources are readily available.
- The vocabulary that pupils use in different subjects and their understanding of new ideas are well developed in response to teachers' thoughtful and often challenging questioning.

- Pupils take a pride in their work and presentation in books is of a high standard.
- Pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are speedily and effectively established in all other areas of the curriculum. For example, in a literacy session, pupils were telling a story from different points of view, using the context of a recent class visit to a country park, along with rivers and the water cycle.
- Teaching assistants are well trained and skilful in supporting teaching and learning. They work closely with teachers to provide good support for pupils, especially those who are disabled or have special educational needs. This strong support for pupils' academic, physical, emotional and social development is based on accurate assessments of their needs. Timely and carefully-planned literacy and numeracy sessions improve achievement for pupils who are falling behind or who find it difficult to learn new skills and concepts.
- Extra support is available for all pupils as needed. This ensures that potential under achievement is identified and dealt with quickly. Any pupil who struggles with a concept or an aspect of their learning receives timely help through careful monitoring of learning and progress in every lesson and is supported by attending catch-up sessions with a teaching assistant later the same day.
- Sometimes pupils do not have enough opportunities to delve into more challenging aspects of their work. As a result, pupils do not always make the progress they could.
- Occasionally, guidance given in the regular marking of work is not precise enough to help pupils improve their own work and help their learning.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- In lessons pupils are attentive and very keen to learn. They work hard and are always willing to share problems with each other. As one pupil said, 'Lessons are always fun because we do lots of different things.'
- They enjoy coming to school and attendance is above average.
- Pupils also behave exceptionally well outside of lessons. They are extremely well mannered in the dining rooms, for example, and their behaviour during assemblies is impeccable.
- Break times are well organised and pupils enjoy having lots to do. For example, both girls and boys happily play football together. At the end of playtime the pupils quickly put equipment away and they keep the buildings and playground tidy.
- Pupils are invariably polite and respectful and have very trusting relationships with others, including the adults who look after them. One pupil said, 'we are all treated the same here and made to feel equal.'
- This was supported by parents who were full of praise for the staff. Many acknowledged the significant impact the staff have on improving their children's behaviour and wished they could do the same at home.
- The academy's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding.
- A wide variety of enrichment activities, including residential visits and trips out to places linked to the subjects being studied, is provided. As one pupil stated, 'It helps make it real.'
- Pupils feel that they are extremely well cared for and parents' views confirm that.
- Several pupils commented, 'Nobody feels unsafe because of bullying.' They report that where disagreements might arise, they are rapidly dealt with. Care and respect are very much part of pupils' thinking and the pupils know that there is always help at hand when it is needed.
- They know about potentially dangerous situations outside of school, including those linked to cyber bullying and they know how to deal with them if they occur.
- Pupils take on a number of important roles within the academy and take their duties very seriously. A wide range of opportunities enables pupils to make an excellent contribution to the life of the academy. Over half of pupils of all ages take up these opportunities and act as play leaders, sports leaders, language ambassadors, readers for leaders who help younger pupils with their reading, and club leaders. For example, the Year 6 readers for leaders gave presentations

on their work to assemblies and are influential in helping younger pupils to improve and enjoy their reading.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and senior leadership team show enthusiasm, clarity of purpose and determination that is central to the academy's improvement, especially in English and mathematics. There is a continuous pursuit of high standards in all aspects of the academy's work, including improving the quality of teaching. Staff are very supportive of the leadership team and morale is high.
- Middle leaders support this determined approach and their skills in checking their areas of responsibility and understanding of where strengths and weaknesses lie are improving. Many are inexperienced in their roles but they are starting to have a positive impact on raising standards, for example in improving pupils' reading skills and their understanding of calculation and number.
- The headteacher has put in place new procedures to ensure staff are held accountable for the progress their pupils make. They have to meet stringent requirements in order to achieve the next salary level. A strong emphasis on self-review and evaluation makes the process open and transparent.
- Overall, the impact of the leaders' approach to ensuring equal opportunities for everyone is reflected in the good progress made by all pupils. There is no discrimination in the academy.
- The academy forms part of a local group of schools supported by the academy trust. The trust provides light touch support for this good school. There is a strong partnership within the local group, which forms the hub of training and development opportunities. This has led to good improvements in leadership and management as well as in teaching and learning. This academy makes a valued contribution to that training as well as supporting other schools in the group where there are difficulties.
- The academy promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. There are well-planned themes in a good curriculum built around visits or visitors, which form the background to much of the pupils' learning. This careful planning capitalises on the wealth of different cultural traditions that the pupils bring to their learning.
- The academy makes good use of the primary school sports funding. Different sports are now available to the pupils and participation has increased. Pupils are increasingly involved in competitions with partner schools, especially in football, netball and cricket, where standards are improving. Local clubs are also drawn in and different sports, for example table tennis, are thriving. Staff are determined that more pupils, even those who are very reluctant, will be involved and 'fired up' by sports.

The governance of the academy:

- The governing body is informed through detailed headteacher's reports matched closely to the academy improvement plan and its own regular and systematic checks on the academy's work and quality of teaching. These checks are carried out through visits to classes and detailed analysis of information about pupils' progress and other aspects of the academy's provision, as well as regular meetings with staff. The governing body has coped with some recent significant changes but is still managed and led well. Governors ensure that safeguarding requirements are met in full. Governors are involved in decisions as to whether teachers and staff should be rewarded with salary increases and review targets for the headteacher. They manage the finances well by, for example, carefully scrutinising the use made of additional funding and its impact on 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	138648
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	440151

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

Type of school	Academy Converter
School category	Primary
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	504
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kevin Lucking
Headteacher	Kristina Hollingdale
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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