

# Heybridge Primary School

Rowan Drive, Heybridge, Maldon, CM9 4TU

**Inspection dates** 12–13 June 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Pupils do not make as much progress as they should in writing and mathematics.
- Teaching is not yet consistently good enough across the school to promote good achievement.
- Lesson activities do not always challenge the most able, and so these pupils do not achieve as highly as they could.
- Teachers do not use information about what pupils already know and can do effectively to plan work at the right level of difficulty.
- Marking gives pupils limited guidance on how to improve their work and meet their targets.
- Pupils do not get enough chances to use and apply their writing skills in different subjects.
- Some teachers do not make sure that activities help pupils to develop secure skills in mental mathematics or to undertake investigations in mathematics.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are improving but where teaching is weaker, some pupils disengage and this limits their learning.
- Some subject leaders are at an early stage in identifying areas for further improvement in areas for which they hold responsibility.
- Governors do not have a good understanding of information about pupils' performance. As a result they have not held leaders sufficiently to account for the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.

### The school has the following strengths

- Senior leaders have secured improvements to teaching and, as a result, pupils are beginning to make quicker progress.
- Reception children make good progress because activities are planned effectively and adults engage well with them.
- Pupils feel safe and secure because care and support arrangements are good.
- Pupils' progress in reading is improving because key skills are taught well.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 15 lessons or parts of lessons, some of which were observed jointly with the headteacher. They looked at pupils’ books, listened to pupils read and checked reading progress records. They also attended an assembly.
- Inspectors observed pupils in lessons, at play, at lunch and as they moved around school.
- Discussions were held with members of the governing body, several representatives of the sponsoring academy trust, The Kemnal Academies Trust (TKAT), staff and pupils. The inspector held a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority.
- A wide range of documentation was reviewed, including records of the quality of teaching and of pupils’ attainment and progress, the school’s view of its performance and the school development plan. In addition, records of the governing body meetings and safeguarding documentation were reviewed.
- During the inspection, the inspectors took account of the 32 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and 13 responses to the staff questionnaire. Inspectors also spoke to parents at the beginning of the school day and during the lunch held especially for fathers before Fathers’ Day.
- During this inspection, inspectors asked additional questions designed to ascertain the academy’s view of the impact and effectiveness of the multi-academy trust’s services to support school improvement. This information will contribute to work being carried out by Ofsted to assess how well the support provided by the multi-academy trust is helping to improve the academies for which it is responsible.

## Inspection team

Susan Thomas-Pounce, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Lynda Beale

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is well below the national average. This is additional government funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals or looked after by the local authority.
- The large majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also below average.
- The school does not meet the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- In December 2012 the school became an academy, sponsored by TKAT.
- There have been significant changes to the school since it became an academy, including a high turnover of staff.

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

- Improve teaching so pupils make good or better progress by:
  - setting work in lessons at the right level of difficulty, especially for the more-able pupils
  - ensuring that marking is thorough and tells pupils clearly how to improve their work
  - checking on pupils' understanding while they are learning, and adjusting tasks so that pupils do as well as they can.
- Improve progress and standards in writing and especially mathematics, by:
  - making sure that pupils make more use of their writing skills in other subjects
  - giving pupils more opportunities to tackle mathematical investigations
  - enabling pupils to develop secure mental mathematics skills so that they can carry out calculations speedily.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management, including governance by:
  - developing the role of subject leaders so that they are able to identify and tackle areas for further improvement
  - sharpening governors' understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, especially data on pupils' performance, so that they can challenge leaders more effectively.

An external review of governance, including the school's use of the pupil premium, should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- As this is a relatively new school, the only external attainment data refers to pupils' performance in the 2013 tests. For pupils in Year 2, this confirmed that standards were in line with the national average in reading and mathematics but well below in writing, with very few pupils reaching the higher levels. The Year 6 results were below average; in particular, standards were well below average in mathematics. Also the proportion of pupils who reached the higher levels in reading, writing or mathematics was below the national average.
- Since September 2013, pupils' progress has accelerated. Checks on the work of pupils currently in the school and records of how well pupils are learning show that progress is improving rapidly and attainment is getting closer to national standards in both key stages. Most pupils in the current Year 6 are making much better progress. These improvements are due to better teaching. However, despite the recent improvements for the current Year 6, standards reached by these pupils remain below average in writing and mathematics.
- Pupils' mental mathematics skills are not always secure and sometimes they are slow in working out quite basic calculations. Pupils do not have enough regular opportunities to practise their writing skills in different subjects. Additionally, too few of the most able pupils reach the higher levels of which they are capable. This is because they are not routinely challenged with hard enough work.
- From starting points that are often low, pupils make at least good progress in the Reception class. Stimulating activities both inside and outside the classroom interest children and adults engage with them well, often making children think really hard.
- In 2013, the proportion of pupils in Year 1 who reached the expected standard in the national screening check on their knowledge of phonics (the sounds that letters make) was below average. The current Year 1 pupils are reaching higher standards. Progress in reading is improving throughout the school due to the well-planned teaching of groups in reading lessons. By Year 6, pupils read widely and often, and discuss their reading, using the text to support their opinions.
- The very few pupils supported through the pupil premium funding now make similar rates of progress as their classmates. The additional funding has been used well to provide tuition to help them overcome their difficulties. There were too few eligible pupils in Year 6 in 2013 to comment on their attainment without risk of identifying individuals.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are fully included in all learning activities. They receive good support and their progress is carefully tracked. This demonstrates the school's commitment to providing equal opportunities for all pupils. These pupils make rates of progress that are similar to, and sometimes better than, those of their classmates.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Teaching is not yet consistently good across the school, and consequently not all pupils are making sufficient progress.
- Tasks and activities given to pupils often do not offer them enough challenge, particularly in writing and mathematics. Occasionally, pupils spend too long on work that is too easy for them

or mark time as they wait for some of their classmates to catch up. An example of this was seen in Key Stage 1 where pupils were learning how to halve numbers. Some members of the group finished their work quickly and accurately without too much difficulty. After waiting patiently, the follow-up activity they were eventually given did not challenge them. This helps to explain why too few pupils are reaching higher levels.

- When marking pupils' work, few teachers give pupils detailed guidance on how to improve it. Teachers do not always check that pupils respond to the advice they are given, so that they learn from previous mistakes.
- Although teaching and progress have been improved in mathematics, some pupils are still not doing well enough. Not enough time is spent in helping pupils to develop secure mental mathematics skills, and pupils do not have enough opportunities to use the calculation skills to solve problems when tackling investigations.
- In lessons in which teachers provide opportunities for pupils to talk about their work, pupils discuss and share their ideas and this helps them to learn. Some teachers adapt work in response to what pupils say, but this is inconsistent across the school. Occasionally, pupils' learning slows when adults fail to use the information they have gathered on pupils' levels of understanding well enough to adjust the tasks set during the next part of the activity. For example, in a Key Stage 2 numeracy lesson, it became clear that some pupils were struggling to understand how to estimate angles. Changes were not made quickly enough, resulting in slower progress for some pupils.
- Pupils for whom the school receives additional funding, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are taught and supported well in both class and small groups, and this has begun to raise their achievement. As a result, the attainment gap between these pupils and their peers, both in school and nationally, is closing.

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

### **requires improvement**

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Pupils' attitudes to learning are not always positive enough to support good progress in all subjects. Attitudes tend to be better where teachers have high expectations and work is challenging.
- Pupils sometimes lose interest and need prompting by adults before they continue with their work. Too often, pupils will stop if they encounter a problem and wait for an adult to come to help them.
- Behaviour around the school is generally good and pupils are welcoming to visitors. They mix well together and move sensibly around the building. The school's behaviour logs show that learning is seldom interrupted by misbehaviour.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Relationships are strong and there is a definite sense of caring for others across the school. Pupils say they feel safe and are cared for well. Parents and staff agree.
- Pupils show that they know how to keep themselves safe around the school site and when using computers. Pupils have a good understanding of the different types of bullying. They say that there are plenty of adults to talk to if they have a problem.

- The school works well with families to improve attendance, which is average and improving. In the occasional instances where attendance becomes a concern, the school is quick to act involving relevant agencies.

### **The leadership and management** requires improvement

- Although there have been improvements in many key areas of the school's work, pupils are not yet making consistently good enough progress to overcome gaps in their learning. Some improvements are recent and have not yet had time to take full effect. For example, subject leaders for literacy and numeracy, while very enthusiastic, are still at a relatively early stage in developing their role and in recognising the steps for further improvement.
- The school's view of its own performance is generally accurate. Changes to the senior leadership team and improvements in governance have provided a clearer direction. Plans for improvement are focusing on the right priorities. These measures are helping to ensure the school has the capacity for continued improvement.
- Leaders have introduced appropriate strategies in order to secure better teaching and achievement. There are now careful checks of pupils' progress and frequent observations on the quality of teaching. Teachers' performance is monitored appropriately. Their targets and pay are linked to the school's priorities, especially improving pupils' achievement.
- The school focuses on encouraging healthy lifestyles and promoting pupils' well-being. The new primary sports funding is used effectively to pay for a sports coach, who is working with staff to improve their skills in teaching a range of sports, and to provide additional after-school activities. Pupils' well-being is enhanced through the use of this funding to increase their active involvement in playtime games and activities.
- The curriculum is supplemented by a good range of visits and visitors to school. These experiences, along with a range of opportunities to take on responsibilities, successfully promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Good support for the school is provided through a successful partnership between the local authority and advisers from The Kemnal Academies Trust. This took a little while to start making a positive difference but, this year, working well together, they have contributed to the improving picture of teaching and pupils' achievement.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Changes to the governing body have helped the governors to become more involved in the work of the school. Although very supportive, they do not understand deeply enough the information about pupils' progress and some other aspects of the school's work, and so are not able to question and challenge leaders appropriately.
  - Governors are aware of how pupil premium funding is being used. They also understand how teachers' pay is linked to the progress pupils make. However, they do not make robust checks on the impact of their spending decisions. They give good support to the school in meeting safeguarding responsibilities, including those relating to staff recruitment. The school's systems for safeguarding meet current national requirements.

## 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>	138994
<b>Local authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	440038

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>	Academy sponsor-led
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	238
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Gordon Eve
<b>Headteacher</b>	Helen Bright
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not Previously Inspected
<b>Telephone number</b>	01621 854082
<b>Fax number</b>	N/A
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