

Horizon Primary Academy

Hilda May Avenue, Swanley, Kent BR8 7BT

Inspection dates

14–15 November 2018

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The new headteacher has inspired a strong and cohesive team of staff. His vision and drive have underpinned a fresh drive to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across the school.
- High-quality, vibrant displays of work celebrate achievement and demonstrate the broad and interesting curriculum. Timetabled scouting sessions offer a popular way of supporting pupils to gain self-esteem and to develop British values.
- An experienced team of governors and The Kemnal Academies Trust (TKAT) have offered consistency at a time of significant change in leadership. Support from the trust and partnership work with other schools are improving the quality of teaching and learning across the school.
- Pupils make good progress in nearly all year groups. Outcomes at the ends of early years and key stages 1 and 2 are broadly in line with the national averages. However, too few pupils achieve the higher standard by the end of key stage 2.
- Children in early years get a flying start to their education. Strong leadership combined with rich and stimulating learning environments support children to make good progress from their starting points.
- Effective phonics teaching underpins the strong progress pupils make in reading in Reception class and key stage 1.
- Staff have worked hard to maintain and improve attendance, which is now in line with the national average. However, although improving, rates of persistent absence for disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are still too high.
- Recently improved assessment and monitoring systems are beginning to be used to adapt teaching and learning. More needs to be done to accelerate the progress of boys and the most able pupils still further.
- Horizon's curriculum offers a range of engaging experiences and activities across the different subject areas. However, planning is not sufficiently detailed to ensure strong progression in key knowledge and skills over time in subjects other than English and mathematics.
- New leaders have introduced a raft of recent initiatives and systems to target improvements to standards, attendance and welfare. More detailed analysis of these initiatives is required to boost staff confidence and consistency of approach and prioritise what works best.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure a consistently high quality of teaching, in line with the best examples in the school, by:
 - raising the level of challenge in English and mathematics across all year groups so that more children exceed the good level of development in early years and more pupils achieve the higher standard in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6 than in the past
 - improving teachers' planning across the wider curriculum to raise the level of challenge in science and the foundation subjects, particularly for the most able pupils.
- Improve the impact of leadership, management and governance by:
 - embedding and evaluating the impact of the many new initiatives to improve attendance, particularly for disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEND
 - ensuring that all staff are consistently confident with systems and procedures to support recent improvements to behaviour
 - improving the analysis of school records relating to personal development, behaviour and welfare, in order to prioritise the most effective actions
 - continuing the packages of training and support for middle leaders new to their roles.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- There has been a sequence of changes in senior leadership recently. Since arriving in September, the new headteacher has quickly forged a strong and cohesive team of new senior and middle leaders. His determination to reinvigorate teaching and learning to improve the quality of education and boost the level of challenge for the most able pupils has been embraced by staff. Parents, carers and pupils have been quick to recognise the benefits. As one parent reported: 'I am very positive that he will change the school to achieve the best it can.' Another added: 'I am pleased with the approach to teaching and clear leadership shown.'
- New leaders were quick to recognise that outcomes in 2018, although in line with national average figures, were well below the very high achievement in reading, writing and mathematics of previous cohorts. By the end of key stages 1 and 2, too few pupils achieved the higher standard in reading, writing or mathematics.
- Since September, leaders have made rapid improvements to the quality of teaching and learning in mathematics and English. Leaders' impact is particularly evident in mathematics where, across all year groups, pupils' work demonstrates that significant improvements have been made to their reasoning and problem-solving skills this term.
- Senior leaders understand the school's strengths and weaknesses in relation to teaching and learning very well. They apply their expertise and knowledge of the school to create appropriate priorities within improvement plans. Suitable training is arranged for staff and external checks and support are sourced when necessary. Consequently, teaching and learning in English and mathematics have improved.
- Senior leaders' analysis of other areas of the school is not yet as thorough or complete. Due to the number of initiatives introduced recently, there is some inconsistency in staff confidence and competency when using these new systems.
- More detailed analysis of trends and patterns in the school's records of behaviour and welfare and better evaluation of trends within attendance data are required. This will enable leaders to be held more accountable for the impact of their actions by governors.
- Staff are united in their support of the headteacher. Nearly all staff who responded to the Ofsted survey think the school is well led and managed. They believe that leaders and governors take their well-being into account and they feel well supported by the school.
- Leaders ensure that a suitably wide range of subjects are taught throughout the school and that the curriculum is taught through interesting and stimulating contexts. However, subject leaders' and teachers' planning is not sufficiently detailed to sequence the key subject-specific vocabulary, knowledge and skills over time in science and the wider curriculum. Consequently, outcomes in science and the foundation subjects are not as strong as they are in English and mathematics.
- New leaders have recently improved the way that they monitor pupils' progress. They use regular assessment information to target appropriate extra support and resources to the right places. Leaders are aware that these new systems will require further

refinements as they develop, but they are already able to identify key issues, such as pockets of weaknesses in boys' reading and writing. This has enabled leaders to adapt teaching and target new resources to improve standards.

- Leaders ensure that teaching assistants are well trained and suitably deployed to provide appropriate support to pupils who have SEND. A wide range of interventions and bespoke support strategies have enabled these pupils to make gains in their reading and mathematics skills.
- Appropriate plans are in place to ensure that good use is made of the additional funding that the school receives to support disadvantaged pupils. Leaders review this funding regularly to ensure that it helps pupils to achieve their full potential.
- The new headteacher and senior leaders are very aware of the diverse community the school serves and have already improved communication with parents in the short time that they have been in post. Consequently, parents now feel actively involved in the life of the school and confident that any concerns they may have are swiftly resolved. As one parent said: 'Horizon school is a brilliant school. Staff are very approachable and will help with any issues that arise with my children. The school really helped with my child's SEN issues.'

Governance of the school

- The governing body is an experienced and dedicated team. Together, governors possess a wealth of relevant skills honed from their educational and business experiences which has enabled them to recruit and support new leaders well. Governors share the headteacher's ambitious aims for Horizon Primary Academy.
- The governing body has successfully challenged leaders to respond to the dip in outcomes last year and begin to raise the quality of teaching and learning. Governors scrutinise performance information in order to assess the success of the school against its own targets, and the standards achieved by similar schools.
- Regular meetings, visits and reports from the headteacher inform governors about aspects of the school such as safeguarding, curriculum design, provision for pupils who have SEND and the impact of the pupil premium funding. However, governors and the trust are not sufficiently well informed with an in-depth analysis of the impact of leaders' actions in these areas of the school's work.
- This is particularly the case, in relation to improving attendance for different groups, monitoring behaviour and evaluating the impact of different initiatives to support the most vulnerable pupils.
- Governors acknowledge that, currently, the school's website does not include the required information about the curriculum and are taking steps to address this.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Strong leadership by the designated safeguarding lead and well-being coordinator ensures that all pupils are kept safe. The well-being coordinator's clear record-keeping supports work with external agencies, where appropriate, to help vulnerable pupils and their families. This is a strength of the

school.

- There is a robust system in place to check adults' suitability to work with children and staff qualifications. Regular training at an appropriate level is provided for all staff on safeguarding matters, informing them of how to react if they have any concerns about a child's welfare. While there are systems in place to ensure that children are safe, leaders are aware that more could be done to ensure that staff are more confident and vigilant in their roles around the school at breaktimes and lunchtimes.
- Leaders carry out appropriate risk assessments and checks on all aspects of health and safety. Staff are appropriately qualified in first aid.
- The school's curriculum includes suitable opportunities for pupils to learn about different aspects of safety, including when online.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The headteacher's whole-school focus on improving teaching and learning has enthused staff and has already had a significant impact in a short period of time. In English and mathematics lessons, teachers typically follow the school's new approach to questioning very effectively to motivate pupils and carefully check their understanding. School records and pupils' books demonstrate how pupils are building on their previous learning to improve their knowledge and skills over time.
- Leaders have used effective strategies to enhance and improve teaching in mathematics. Staff have strong subject knowledge. Most pupils can apply their skills confidently when reasoning and solving problems. This is having a positive impact on pupils' progress across the school.
- Good relationships and effective teaching in English and mathematics enable most pupils to make strong progress in these subjects, particularly in early years and key stage 1. However, assessment is not always used effectively enough to refine teaching so that the most able pupils are stretched sufficiently to achieve at the higher standard by the end of key stage 2.
- Typically, teachers are skilled at using questioning to promote deeper thinking and engage pupils. Staff regularly work together, and with colleagues from TKAT and a local network of other schools, to check work in pupils' books and ensure that assessments are valid and reliable.
- The new senior leadership team has introduced new monitoring systems to improve their understanding of pupils' progress over time. Although in its early stages, this new assessment and tracking system has already identified some useful patterns, enabling teachers to adapt and refine their teaching to target improvements to boys reading and writing skills.
- Further work is required to ensure a more accurate analysis of the impact of interventions to challenge and improve the achievement of the most able pupils. Leaders are aware of this and have plans in place to achieve these improvements.
- Teaching assistants are deployed wisely to help disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEND to play an active role in lessons. However, teachers are not always consistent in making effective use of assessment information to set appropriately

challenging work for these groups, in line with the best examples in the school.

- As well as in-class support, a small number of pupils who have SEND benefit from personalised learning programmes offered through the school's 'The Lodge' provision. Here the very positive relationships between leaders, teaching assistants and pupils underpin the high-quality support on offer. Staff work with classroom teachers so that pupils make strong progress from their starting points, completing work in line with their peers.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils say that they feel safe and secure at Horizon, and they are. They can confidently recall how to keep themselves safe, including when accessing the internet.
- The school promotes a caring ethos. Older pupils take pride in supporting younger ones, for instance through acting as 'buddies' and linking them to the work of the well-being coordinator. In addition, the school's 'Nest' area offers support and a reassuring environment to any pupils who feel vulnerable during breaktime and lunchtime.
- Pupils show respect for one another and for adults in the school. They are aware of the need for rules and consequences. Parents and pupils particularly value how scouting activities each Friday offer the chance for pupils to reflect on British values and celebrate diversity.
- Although the curriculum provides regular opportunities for religious education, pupils are not always confident to express their understanding of different faiths and cultures. This aspect of the curriculum needs to be refined to better prepare pupils for life in modern Britain.
- The sport premium funding is used effectively so that pupils have increased access to a range of sporting activities and clubs. Together with timetabled physical exercise lessons, these provide regular opportunities for pupils to learn how to keep themselves fit and healthy.
- A minority of parents and pupils expressed a concern about bullying and some unkind behaviour in the past. However, they reported that this had improved under the school's new leadership. Pupils say that there is very little bullying and, when it does occur, they are confident that adults will always listen and intervene to put a stop to any unkind behaviour.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils at Horizon is good. Pupils behave well in lessons, listen attentively to the teacher and enjoy completing tasks. Most books are well presented.
- There is a strong sense of community, and pupils socialise well together at breaktime and lunchtime. Pupils are proud to participate in after-school clubs and the school council or to act as play leaders.

- Overall attendance is in line with national figures. Leaders have taken appropriate action to tackle the persistent absence of a small cohort of pupils and promote the value of good attendance. By working closely with parents and external agencies, the school has secured some recent improvements. Senior leaders are aware that the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEND needs to continue to improve to match that of their peers.
- Pupils understand what is expected of them and the associated rewards for achievement and sanctions for any inappropriate behaviour. Disruptions to lessons are rare and, when they do occur, staff are quick to resolve any issues. Leaders maintain records of incidents, but a more thorough and detailed analysis of these is needed to evaluate fully the impact of their recently revised behaviour and attendance systems.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- In the past, pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics has been very high. This dipped in 2018 but was still in line with national figures.
- A high proportion of pupils achieve age-related expectations in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 1. By the end of key stage 2, pupils attain in line with the national average in writing and mathematics and standards in reading are high. However, too few pupils achieve the higher standard in reading, writing or mathematics.
- The teaching of phonics in the early years and Year 1 has consistently improved over time and is good. The proportion of pupils who achieved the expected standard in the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1 over the last three years has been above the national average.
- Older pupils are supported to read with fluency and confidence and they analyse texts well. However, the proportion of pupils achieving the higher standard in reading by the end of Year 6 is too low. Some of the most able pupils reported that they would like more challenging books to read.
- Where teaching is strongest, pupils' books demonstrate that they are confident writers who can use creative vocabulary well and write appropriately for an audience. Pupils are supported to develop grammatical skills and use them appropriately for the genre that they are adopting. Spelling is usually accurate and, where it is not, pupils apply their phonics skills. Leaders are aware that some teaching is inconsistent and training for teachers is planned to rectify this.
- Leaders have made good use of training to support improvements to the teaching of mathematics. Teachers provide regular opportunities for pupils to develop problem-solving and reasoning skills. However, the progress of some groups of pupils is not as strong as it could be because they are unsure about strategies they could use to solve a problem or demonstrate their reasoning.
- Books demonstrate that disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEND typically make strong progress from their starting points. Pupils are supported appropriately, and leaders carefully track how well they are doing. Refinements to the planning and delivery of the curriculum are needed to enable these groups to make the accelerated

progress needed to catch up with their peers.

- Teachers have outline curriculum planning for science, technology, the arts and humanities. However, these plans do not sequence the depth of knowledge and skills pupils need to understand within each of these subjects sufficiently well. As a result, pupils' books demonstrate that their achievement in science and the wider curriculum is inconsistent across the school.

Early years provision

Good

- Leadership in early years is very effective and ensures that the achievement of children in the Reception class is a strength of the school. Leaders have high aspirations and are determined that all children should make good or better progress. Since the previous inspection, staff have worked very hard to improve the learning environment and create a richer range of learning experiences for the children.
- Children enter the early years with skills and knowledge which on average are slightly below their chronological age. Good relationships with adults and each other ensure that they quickly adapt to school life and are happy, motivated and ready to learn. By the time children leave the Reception Year, the large majority progress well to reach a good level of development and are well equipped for key stage 1.
- Parents particularly value the nurturing ethos at Horizon Primary Academy and most are very complimentary about the transition arrangements for starting early years. They reported to inspectors that their children had settled in very quickly, making friends and quickly progressing with their reading and other skills.
- The indoor and outdoor areas are well resourced and stimulating. Children keenly engage with the variety of equipment available to learn to do things independently and cooperatively. Staff are on hand if a more directed approach is necessary when children are playing. Adults skilfully deploy a blend of simple instructions, targeted praise and demonstrations to encourage children to enjoy learning and develop resilience.
- Children quickly gain the skills of listening attentively to adults and to each other. This ensures that their behaviour is good, both in the classroom and in the outside area. Children collaborate well with their peers and make choices about the activities that they want to do.
- Nearly all children make a good start in learning to read, because the teaching of phonics in Reception is very effective. Similarly, through careful planning and resourcing, staff ensure that children's number skills are developed well.
- Children confidently engage in a variety of well-planned activities supporting all areas of their learning. Leaders' effective monitoring of their progress supports staff to plan suitable next steps for most children. Senior leaders are keen to improve outcomes still further by providing more demanding tasks to challenge the most able children within the group.

School details

Unique reference number	137136
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10054148

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	205
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Garry Nancekievill
Headteacher	David Moss
Telephone number	01322 665235
Website	www.horizon-tkat.org
Email address	admin@horizon-tkat.org
Date of previous inspection	8 March 2018

Information about this school

- Horizon Primary Academy is a smaller-than-average community primary school.
- The school is a sponsored academy within The Kemnal Academies Trust (TKAT), a large multi-academy trust with 44 academies across the south of England. The directors of TKAT are responsible for, and oversee, the management and administration of its primary and secondary academies. The trust delegates aspects of governance to the local governing body. This local governing body is responsible for taking a strategic overview of the school and monitoring its policies, targets and priorities.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage and speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEND is in line with the national average. The proportion of pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium is well above the national average.
- Over the past year, there was a period of staffing changes at the school. The previous substantive headteacher left during the last academic year and the school had an interim headteacher and then an acting headteacher. The deputy headteacher left last

July. The current headteacher took up post in September 2018 and has restructured senior and middle leadership with new appointments.

- The school runs a breakfast and an after-school club.
- The school has received support from TKAT to support teaching, learning and assessment as well as leadership and management.

Information about this inspection

- Both inspectors visited every classroom to gather evidence to contribute to the evaluation of the quality of teaching, learning, and assessment. Many of these observations were conducted jointly with senior leaders. In addition, inspectors heard pupils read and visited an assembly and the school's 'Nest' and 'Lodge' provisions for pupils requiring extra support.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, subject leaders, members of the local governing body and representatives from TKAT.
- Inspectors talked to pupils about their learning and looked at their work across a range of subjects. They spoke to pupils on the playground and during lessons and the lead inspector met with a group of pupils to gather their views.
- Conversations were held with some parents at the beginning of each day of the inspection. The inspectors also considered the views expressed in 59 responses to the online questionnaire Parent View, including 21 free-text comments. They also took in to account 11 responses to the staff questionnaire and 13 replies to the pupil survey provided by Ofsted.
- A wide range of school documentation was scrutinised, including that relating to: policies, self-evaluation, improvement planning, safeguarding, pupils' achievement, behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors reviewed the record of leaders' vetting and checks on the suitability of adults to work with pupils and spoke to staff and governors about safeguarding procedures in the school.

Inspection team

Matthew Newberry, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Kirstine Boon

Ofsted Inspector

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