

Hillsgrove Primary School

Sidmouth Road, Welling, Kent DA16 1DR

Inspection dates

27–28 March 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	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher, governors and senior leaders are ambitious for the success of their pupils and demonstrate a determination and drive for improvement.
- The leadership team's determined focus on improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment has ensured that the quality of teaching is typically good. As a result, pupils enjoy learning and make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The teaching of reading is a strength of the school. Pupils enjoy books and are encouraged to read widely. Consequently, pupils in key stage 2 are successfully building upon the positive outcomes at the end of key stage 1 and are making good and better progress.
- The teaching of phonics in key stage 1 is strong and is contributing to good and improving standards in reading and writing across the school.
- Pupils in key stage 1 make good progress, and outcomes match and exceed national expectations.
- Pupils feel safe and are well cared for by all staff. They behave with respect and consideration towards each other, and speak politely and confidently to adults.
- Those pupils who attend the specialist provision for autistic spectrum disorder receive targeted support and integrate well into the mainstream school. As a result, these pupils make good progress.
- The curriculum is broad, balanced and interesting. However, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to study topics in depth and, in particular, to challenge the most able. The standard of writing in topic work is not as good as that seen in writing books.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress across the curriculum, although the most able disadvantaged pupils could be challenged further, particularly in reading.
- The early years provision is good and prepares children well for their next stage of learning. The Nursery is a particular strength of the school as it nurtures children's natural sense of curiosity and creativity. However, in Reception classes, there are times when opportunities to develop problem-solving and reasoning skills in mathematics are missed and tasks do not always challenge the most able.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve outcomes for all pupils by:
 - providing greater challenge for the most able pupils, including the disadvantaged high attainers in reading
 - ensuring that pupils' knowledge and understanding in subjects other than English and mathematics are less superficial by giving them opportunities to deepen their learning during topic work and by challenging the most able
 - expecting the same standard of writing in science and topic work that is seen in writing books
 - providing more opportunities for children in early years to experience problem solving in mathematics, in order to develop their reasoning and curiosity
 - providing further challenge for the early years Reception children in all areas of learning.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher is ambitious for the school and has a determination to improve the life chances of every pupil. He is ably supported by a skilled senior leadership team. As a result, the standard of teaching and learning is typically good.
- The headteacher has secured an effective and stable teaching staff by offering good school-based training to students, many of whom go on to become newly qualified teachers in the school. He continues to offer further professional development and career progression, which encourages staff to grow within the setting. He underpins this with rigorous performance management systems that promote pupils' progress. As a consequence, teachers consistently apply teaching techniques that are having a positive effect on standards in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Leaders monitor the quality of teaching, learning and assessment frequently and effectively. In collaboration with their school improvement partner, they provide highly effective support linked to whole-school priorities. This is having a positive impact on current pupils' progress, particularly in reading across key stage 2.
- Leaders are working effectively with other schools in the Amadeus Multi-Academy Trust to ensure that assessments are accurate and to improve the quality of teaching and learning.
- English and mathematics leaders regularly monitor and track the progress of pupils. Regular pupil progress meetings and reviews by the trust help leaders to identify gaps in pupils' understanding and to schedule appropriate staff training and support for pupils. For example, an analysis of the school's assessment information revealed that pupils' knowledge of vocabulary was a barrier to reading. In response to this, the school put in place a whole-school approach to enhancing pupils' vocabulary, which is now having a positive effect on both reading and writing standards. In addition to this, the school has improved the quality of the books available to key stage 2 pupils, ensuring that they read widely across a range of genres. As a result, pupils enjoy reading, and their fluency and confidence are improving rapidly.
- Leaders track the progress of particular groups of pupils across the school. By doing so, they identify any underachieving groups and can ensure that they receive appropriate support.
- Leaders use the pupil premium funding effectively to support disadvantaged pupils so that they make good progress towards the expected standards. Leaders are aware that they need to do more to ensure that the most able disadvantaged pupils are sufficiently challenged, particularly in reading.
- Leaders have introduced a daily reading lesson across the school that is being consistently applied and is having a positive effect upon pupils' understanding of the texts they are reading. Leaders have put good questioning techniques as central to the success of these sessions. Consequently, pupils are able to discuss aspects of characterisation from books they are reading with growing confidence.
- The special educational needs coordinator delivers good professional development to teachers and support staff. The progress of pupils who attend the specialist provision

for pupils who have autistic spectrum disorder is carefully monitored. Pupils who are falling behind are identified quickly and receive the appropriate support. Leaders ensure that pupils who attend the specialist provision are integrated into the mainstream classes as much as possible. As a result, pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities are making good progress.

- Newly qualified teachers have opportunities to develop their skills by observing best practice across the trust schools. They receive good training that is tailored to their needs and relevant to securing the best possible progress for pupils. Much of the training they receive is delivered in the school by expert staff, who also deliver training across the trust.
- The curriculum is broad, balanced and interesting. Pupils study a range of subjects such as German, history, geography and music. Additional funding provided by the government for the development of sport has been spent well and pupils have a wide range of sporting activities accessible to them. The school places an importance on healthy living, and pupils know how to maintain a healthy lifestyle. However, some of the learning in history and geography is too superficial and there are not enough opportunities to study topics in depth. Most-able pupils could be challenged further in their topic work.
- Leaders promote diversity through the curriculum by exploring different cultures during topic work and running special events. Most recently, the school invited a relative of pupils from Ghana to talk about life there; this was filmed by the BBC and uploaded to the school's website. As a result pupils integrate seamlessly into the school and the community.
- Leaders actively seek the views of pupils and parents and carers, and the results from their questionnaires are published on the school's website. Leaders are continually evaluating and refining the way in which they communicate with parents, and as a consequence the majority of parents who expressed a view during the inspection said that they were happy with the school.

Governance of the school

- Governors are highly committed to improving the standards in the school.
- The governing body has a breadth of expertise with which to challenge and support the school. For example, governors take appropriate action when required to ensure that the school continues to improve achievement for all pupils.
- Governors visit the school regularly to gather critical information with which to challenge and support the school.
- Governors' oversight of the school's safeguarding processes is robust. A regular audit of the single central record is undertaken to ensure that checks to assess adults' suitability to work with children are recorded methodically and pupils are kept safe.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

- The school site is safe and secure. All visitors to the school are welcomed through the secure entrance, their credentials are checked and the school provides them with information about the safeguarding procedures that are in place.
- The school is vigilant in carrying out checks to assess adults' suitability to work with children. All staff are trained well and they have received training at the level that is required.
- The systems for making referrals to the designated safeguarding leads are rigorous and thorough. Staff have a detailed understanding of the local vulnerabilities and know what to do if they have a concern about pupils' safety or welfare. Similarly, the school works proactively with other agencies to protect any children who might be at risk.
- Pupils spoke confidently about the range of adults to whom they can turn for support. They also know how to stay safe and have a secure understanding of the dangers associated with social media and the internet.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- An established cycle of monitoring, support and challenge ensures that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is typically good and continuing to improve further. All teachers are aware of the underperforming groups, plan carefully for them and review their progress regularly. As a result, the quality of writing and mathematics is good and often better across the school. The standard of reading is improving rapidly and much of it is good.
- The teaching of phonics is a strength of the school. In the Year 1 and Year 2 phonics lessons observed, pupils were taught to be accurate with their pronunciation. They were able to separate the sounds within words and blend them together successfully. They were encouraged to look at the root of a word to help them both read and understand. Teachers were quick to correct any misconceptions. This approach has supported the teaching and learning well across key stage 1 so that pupils enter key stage 2 with above-average skills in reading and writing.
- Teachers consistently apply a standardised approach to the teaching of reading. As reading in key stage 2 was identified as an area for improvement, staff received training to improve the standard of teaching and this is having a very positive effect. Pupils enjoy reading and are able to discuss with maturity and insight the themes and characters of the texts they have studied. The texts read by pupils are appropriately challenging and they speak enthusiastically about the way in which the school encourages them to read widely. Teachers give effective guidance, ensuring that pupils make good progress.
- The most able pupils in key stage 2 use reading skills such as inference and prediction well and are able to articulate their ideas with conviction. There are times, however, when some pupils could be challenged even further, particularly the most able disadvantaged pupils.
- Daily guided reading sessions are well structured and encourage pupils to read a wide range of texts. Skilful questioning by teachers enables pupils to empathise with characters and think more deeply about meanings and emotions.

- All teachers ensure that their planning contains a focus to improve pupils' vocabulary. Teachers expect pupils to find new and exciting words with which to express themselves. This is having a positive effect upon the standard of writing because pupils are taught to rehearse sentences of sufficient quality orally before they write.
- Teaching across key stage 1 is consistently good and pupils are prepared well for the next stage of their learning. During mathematics lessons, pupils were seen using practical equipment that supported and embedded their learning. Teachers assessed pupils' learning and their interventions were timely and effective. Support staff are used well and contribute to pupils' high achievement.
- During mathematics lessons, pupils are given opportunities to solve problems and develop their reasoning skills well. In a Year 6 class, pupils were given a suitably challenging problem, which required them to relate the area of a piece of land to its cost. Pupils were then invited to debate the moral integrity of the purchase.
- Where support staff are skilled in questioning techniques and give pupils time to think for themselves, pupils' progress is enhanced.
- Teachers give focused and well-considered guidance to pupils across the school in reading, writing and mathematics and this is helping pupils to make good progress in these subjects. However, this is not always the case in other subjects, particularly in topic work, where some topics are not studied in sufficient depth and there is not enough challenge for the most able. Writing in subjects other than English is not of the same quality because of lower expectations. Sometimes, pupils' progress is hampered by unnecessary worksheets that limit creativity.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils have a very positive attitude to learning. They are eager, responsive and attentive, particularly when the work is sufficiently challenging and engaging.
- English and mathematics books are well presented and reflect the school's focus on handwriting and good presentation. Pupils are proud of their work and eager to show it to visitors. Further examples of this are seen in the pupils' work that is displayed around the school.
- Pupils stated clearly that the school works hard to keep them safe. They know who to go to if they have a problem. Pupils said that bullying is rare and they are confident that staff deal with it swiftly and effectively. The school has links with a charity that celebrates diversity, and pupils benefit from workshops that explore the theme of bullying.
- The teaching of personal, social and health education is strong. Pupils learn to manage risk and keep themselves safe, particularly when working online. They are encouraged to make healthy food choices and be active.
- Pupils demonstrate a clear understanding of the importance of being tolerant towards those of all faiths and none. They speak positively about visits from different faith leaders and trips to local places of worship, for example a Sikh temple. They learn

about other faiths as part of the curriculum, although pupils in key stage 2 would benefit from studying these faiths in more depth as at times their knowledge is superficial.

- During a key stage 2 assembly, pupils explored the link between the lion in 'The Lion the Witch and the Wardrobe' by C.S. Lewis and Jesus. They engaged fully and made reflective observations.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils, including those who attend the specialist resource for pupils with autistic spectrum disorder, is good.
- Pupils are friendly, polite, welcoming to visitors and respectful to adults and each other. They display consistently good behaviour both in the classroom and around the school. Key stage 1 playtimes are enhanced by engaging activities that develop pupils' play skills.
- The vast majority of parents expressed their satisfaction with the way in which the school deals with behaviour. They feel that their child is safe, happy and looked after in school.
- Pupils speak enthusiastically about behaviour pyramids that encourage them to make the right decisions. They say that these have helped to improve the culture of the school and include debates around a big question, for example 'Is it ever right to bully a bully?'
- Attendance is improving and is now in line with the national average. Persistent absence figures have dropped significantly due to the school's collaboration with the educational welfare officer, but the school continues to maintain focus on this area.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils have well-developed writing and mathematics skills at both key stage 1 and key stage 2, and pupils' current progress is good and sometimes better than good.
- The school correctly identified the teaching and learning of reading as an area for development and has taken strong action, for example training staff in the skilful use of questioning and improving pupils' access to a wider range of high-quality texts. As a result, the progress in reading across key stage 2 is currently good and improving.
- Assessment information collected by the school, and validated by the local authority and with other trust schools, indicates that the current Year 6 pupils are making strong progress in reading and the proportion on track to attain the expected standard is above the national average. This represents good progress from their key stage 1 starting points.
- This good progress can be seen in writing and mathematics books. Pupils organise their writing well, include ambitious vocabulary and enhance their work with well-considered punctuation. In mathematics books and during lessons, pupils are seen developing their numerical, problem-solving and reasoning skills because of the effective guidance provided.

- The proportion of pupils in Year 1 who meet the standard of the phonics check is consistently well above average. In Year 2, the school ensures that pupils continue to build upon this success.
- In 2017, the proportions of pupils attaining the expected standard and greater depth in reading, writing and mathematics were well above average at the end of key stage 1. Evidence seen during the inspection confirms that this represents good and sometimes better than good progress.
- Pupils in key stage 1 and key stage 2 demonstrate scientific knowledge and understanding that are in line with age-related expectations. The work in science books is interesting and pupils are developing the language of science well. However, there are not enough opportunities for them to hypothesise and develop scientific thinking, particularly the most able. The standard of writing is not as high as that seen in their writing books.
- Work seen in topic books is interesting and pupils learn a breadth of factual information. At times, the learning lacks depth and the progress is weaker because pupils are not always given the opportunity to develop their ideas. There is sometimes an over-reliance on worksheets that hamper progress and provide little challenge for the most able.

Early years provision

Good

- Most children enter the school's Nursery with skills that are in line with the national average. A significant proportion of children who speak English as an additional language join the school in Reception with some skills that are below average. These children make rapid progress so that, by the end of Reception Year, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development is consistently well above the national average. This represents good and sometimes better than good progress from their starting points.
- The early years is well led and managed. Children are prepared appropriately for the Year 1 curriculum through a concentrated focus on phonics, writing and mathematics. Staff collaborate with other early years practitioners across the trust, ensuring that judgements made about how well children learn are accurate. Adults ensure that children are both happy and safe.
- Children behave well and maintain their attention for long periods on some activities. They are eager to come to school and enjoy learning.
- Parents are part of the assessment process and are invited to attend meetings on a regular basis in order to share information about their child. An overwhelming majority of parents speak highly of the early years provision.
- The Nursery is very well managed and a strength of the school. Creativity is fostered through a curriculum that responds to the interests of the children. For example, when children were outside looking for evidence of nest-building, they found some interesting stones. These were later explored for their colour and texture and placed on the interest table. The classroom is vibrant and welcoming, with activities that promote problem solving and curiosity. This is continued outdoors where children can be seen extending their learning through collaborative play.

- Adults in the Nursery use skilful questioning techniques effectively to develop children's language and extend their thinking. Question prompts are displayed on the wall of the classroom to which staff can refer. Children express themselves well because of the focus upon spoken language and are prepared well for Reception. Letters and words are displayed around the classroom and children are invited to read by themselves both inside and outside the classroom. Children demonstrate that they are beginning to recognise phonic sounds and use them for reading.
- Reading corners are attractive in both Nursery and Reception classrooms. Children enjoy books and speak enthusiastically about the texts that teachers read to them during lessons. One of the school's priorities is to enhance the quality of the books available to children across early years. This would encourage children to practise and develop their reading skills and provide further challenge for the most able.
- Phonics teaching across the early years is strong. Children learn how to build letter sounds into words because of good modelling by the teachers. Children use phonics well in their writing and their attempts at spelling are plausible. They learn how to hold a sentence in their head before writing and check with a partner to ensure that it makes sense. Teachers give children good opportunities to enhance their vocabulary by introducing experiences that develop the senses, for example growing plants and handling vegetables. However, there are times when children's responses could be further improved by more skilful questioning from support staff, particularly in Reception.
- The outdoor area is well stocked and promotes physical development and sharing particularly well. There are times, however, when activities are not sufficiently stimulating and challenging, particularly for the most able.
- During a mathematics lesson observed in Reception, children demonstrated a good understanding of how to count in tens up to one hundred. They went on to apply this to money and were asked to cut out pictures of ten pence pieces and match them to the required amounts. Children were able to complete the task easily because it lacked sufficient challenge, particularly for the most able. Children would benefit from increased opportunities to develop problem-solving and reasoning skills.

School details

Unique reference number	142295
Local authority	Bexley
Inspection number	10048408

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	427
Appropriate authority	The board of trustees
Chair	Roberta Yarwood-Unachukwu
Headteacher	Peter Rhodes
Telephone number	02083034949
Website	
Email address	admin@hillsgrove.bexley.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average primary. It converted to an academy in August 2015 and is a member of the Amadeus Multi-Academy Trust. The trust comprises four local primary schools, each with their own governing body. The Trust Board has overall responsibility for the schools; their running is delegated to the local governing body and headteacher.
- The proportion of pupils supported by pupil premium funding is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is in line with the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is slightly higher than the national average.
- The majority of pupils are White British.
- The school has a resource base/specialist provision for eight pupils.

- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in every class and took the opportunity to scrutinise pupils' work on these occasions and at other times. The inspectors also attended two assemblies.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders, other school leaders and groups of staff, and members of the governing body. A phone call was held with the school's improvement adviser. The chairperson of the Amadeus Trust was present at some of the meetings.
- A wide range of documentary evidence was scrutinised. This included the school's own self-evaluation, the school development plan, minutes of governors' meetings, records of assessments of pupils' work and information about their progress. Documents relating to safeguarding and child protection were also checked. Information about the work that the school does within the Amadeus Trust was discussed.
- The inspectors spoke with pupils throughout the inspection to seek their views and listened to a selection of them read.
- Inspectors considered the views of 69 parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as the views expressed by parents during the inspection. They also considered the school's pupil survey and the views of staff gathered during the inspection.

Inspection team

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Jo Jones	Ofsted Inspector

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