

Hadlow Primary School

Hadlow, Tonbridge, Kent TN11 0EH

Inspection dates 22–23 March 2016

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	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The new headteacher has rapidly gained the confidence and support of pupils, parents and staff. Staff morale is high and there is a shared determination to forge further improvements.
- Leadership is strong. The headteacher is highly effective and is supported very well by the deputy headteacher. Leadership capacity has increased and there is now an expanded, strong senior leadership team.
- The school has improved since the previous inspection. Teaching and learning are now good and as a result pupils make good progress and achieve well. By the time they leave at the end of Year 6, standards are significantly above average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils have good attitudes to learning and want to do well. They are inspired and motivated by their teachers. Good, trusting relationships between pupils and teachers mean that pupils work hard and are confident to learn from their mistakes.
- Behaviour is good. Pupils are friendly, polite and well mannered. They conduct themselves well in lessons and around the school. They feel safe and happy at school and are well looked after.
- Children make good progress in the early years and settle very happily into school life.
- Governors share the headteacher’s ambition and determination to improve the school further and hold leaders to account effectively for the school’s performance.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Leaders’ checks and the work in pupils’ books show that, despite some outstanding teaching and learning, not enough is of the same highest quality to ensure that pupils always make the rapid progress of which they are capable.
- Senior leaders do not have a robust overview of the progress over time of different groups of pupils when compared to others.
- The quality of the early years environment is not as effective in supporting learning as other classes in the school.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further develop the expertise of staff to move teaching and learning to outstanding and provide opportunities for the best practice, skills and expertise in the school to be shared among staff more widely.
- Ensure there is a strategic overview of the progress of different groups of pupils compared to others that is shared with all leaders.
- Improve the quality of the environment in the early years, to be as good as that presented in the rest of the school, so that it promotes more effective learning.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher, deputy headteacher, senior leaders and governors are ambitious for the school and share a determination to build further on the improvements realised since the previous inspection.
- After a period of considerable turbulence in leadership, there is now a strong, united and expanded senior leadership team. Senior leaders work well together to provide the best learning and personal experiences for pupils. As one leader wrote, 'The team at Hadlow are like an extended family with a shared vision – to provide the best learning experiences for our amazing children.'
- The deputy headteacher has provided consistency for parents and pupils through the changes in leadership and staffing. Then as now, the overriding and successful aim has been to ensure pupils continued successfully with their learning. Teaching and learning, pupils' achievement and leadership and management have all improved since the previous inspection and are now good.
- The headteacher, who is supported very effectively by the deputy headteacher, has rapidly secured the confidence of pupils, parents and staff since his appointment. A parent wrote that her children said 'the headteacher is fun but strict and is making the school a great place to be again'. A member of staff commented, 'Hadlow is a family and we all do our best to support and nurture the children. We are a strong team and the school has effective management now with the headteacher and deputy who are passionate about Hadlow succeeding.'
- Staff morale is high. All staff respond well to the headteacher's enthusiasm and aspirations.
- Senior leaders' own checks on the school's performance in all areas of its work are accurate and provide clear direction for further improvement. Leaders regularly check the quality of teaching and learning and the impact it is having on pupils' progress. If any teaching does not meet the standard expected, effective support is given, targets are set and improvement is sought.
- Senior leaders hold regular meetings with class teachers to discuss the progress of pupils and identify those who need additional support. This gives leaders a very clear picture of the progress made by individual pupils. The strategic overview of progress for different groups throughout the school is less robust, however, in enabling leaders to share information and evaluate the performance of different groups over time compared to other pupils.
- Teachers and teaching assistants welcome the opportunities to develop their individual skills and meet whole-school priorities through further training. This has helped to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Teachers new to the school are supported well.
- Subject leaders have a positive impact on the development of their subjects and contribute to improved teaching, learning and progress. Although some leaders are new to their roles and developing their skills, expectations are clear and they provide effective guidance and support to colleagues.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. Teachers plan the subjects taught carefully and creatively to engage pupils' interests and spark their enthusiasm for learning. For example, the whole-school topic this term is based on a quotation from Roald Dahl: 'Those who don't believe in magic will never find it.' Engaging texts, from *The Hobbit* in Year 6 to *The Enchanted Forest* and *Zog* in Key Stage 1, are used to successfully motivate pupils' learning in a range of subjects. One parent commented, 'Our two children cannot wait to go to school each day. They are engaged and excited by the curriculum.'
- Learning is enriched by a wealth of extra activities including a good range of clubs. These activities extend learning beyond the classroom and help pupils to learn new skills, for example fencing, judo or playing the violin. These activities make a good contribution to pupils' personal as well as their academic development.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well through the curriculum, assemblies and the school's values. The school fosters a culture of tolerance and respect and pupils learn about and celebrate different religions and cultures.
- All staff have a strong commitment to equal opportunities and ensure that all pupils learn without any type of discrimination. Staff make it clear that any language or action that may cause offence is unacceptable. Pupils understand the need for rules within the school and in the wider society. Older pupils actively promote the golden rules and the school's values of collaboration, resilience, independence, creativity and reflection. Pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain because all staff and pupils promote and demonstrate fundamental British values in all areas across the school.
- The primary physical education and sport funding is used effectively to enhance the existing good

physical education provision. It is spent in a range of ways, mainly to enhance the skills of pupils and teachers and therefore improve outcomes for pupils.

- The school uses additional funding for disadvantaged pupils effectively to ensure they take part in the full life of the school and receive additional personal and academic support where needed. This has ensured that by Year 6 disadvantaged pupils make similar good progress to other pupils nationally and others in the school.
- The local authority has supported the school well, particularly to ensure interim leadership arrangements over the past year have been effective. It has challenged the school for its performance since the previous inspection and supported it on its journey of improvement. Advisers have worked with staff and governors and continue to provide training and advice.
- Most parents who responded to the online questionnaire are very positive about all aspects of the school's work. A few expressed their concerns over the staffing and leadership changes over the past year but praised the commitment of the staff during this time and the continued focus on their children's learning. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the leadership of the new headteacher and his team.

■ **The governance of the school**

- The governing body shares the ambition and aspirations of the headteacher to ensure that the school continues to improve. Governors have a clear idea of the strengths of the school and the key priorities for further development.
- The governing body has changed the structure of the way it works to enable governors to be more efficient and well informed of the school's work. They are well informed by the headteacher and senior leaders, as well as by their own analysis of progress information and their own monitoring visits.
- As a result they are able to hold leaders to account for the school's performance more effectively than was previously the case, and provide a balance of support and challenge. They are keen to check and review the impact of their work to ensure they further increase their effectiveness in holding the school to account.
- Governors have undertaken much training to ensure that the governing body fulfils its strategic role effectively.
- The turbulence in leadership has been a challenge for the governing body but governors were determined to appoint the right headteacher who could move the school forward.
- There is a good understanding of the quality of teaching and governors oversee decisions about teachers' pay and promotion.
- Governors ensure that additional funding is used effectively, through their monitoring and questions to leaders, to determine that it is making a difference for pupils.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Senior leaders ensure that all staff are trained and that procedures are robust and well known by all staff. Recent changes and upgrades to the building have improved the security and safety of the school site. There are effective links with external agencies to provide support for pupils. Safeguarding requirements are fully met and, as a result, pupils feel safe and secure.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Teaching and learning have improved since the previous inspection and are now good. As a result, pupils make good progress and achieve well.
- Teachers work closely with senior leaders to make regular checks on pupils' progress. This enables them to quickly identify any pupils who may be falling behind, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs or disability. Appropriate additional support is usually provided either in class or outside of class lessons.
- Relationships between pupils and their teachers are good. As a result, pupils are confident to take risks and learn from their mistakes, as they know their efforts are valued. Pupils have good attitudes to learning and respond well to teachers' high expectations and the positive, 'can do' or 'if I can't do it yet I will be able to' attitude that pervades the school. Pupils say their teachers make learning as fun as possible.
- One parent wrote, 'My child's teachers have really instilled a positive attitude so he is not afraid to try. Hadlow School has developed my son's resilience and he is very proud of his work.'

- The teachers and teaching assistants work very well together in a culture of mutual support and strong teamwork. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to the learning of pupils of all abilities by helping to stretch the learning of the most able or engaging those who may be struggling.
- Teachers mostly provide lessons that motivate and inspire pupils' learning. They ask questions that challenge pupils and promote a depth of learning and understanding. On a few occasions, pupils who may be struggling to learn new things are not given sufficient support to accelerate their learning and so they do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- Teachers and teaching assistants are good role models for pupils. Classrooms are exciting and motivating and support teaching and learning very well through displays and prompts for learning.
- Teaching places appropriate emphasis on developing pupils' skills in reading, writing and mathematics with increasing opportunities to develop these skills when working in other subjects, particularly writing.
- The school's policy for marking and feedback is used consistently across the school. Pupils say that teachers' comments help them know how to improve their work.
- Pupils' good behaviour and positive attitudes help them make good progress. They work together well and value opportunities to learn from each other.
- The most-able pupils are challenged well by teachers and teaching assistants. Expectations are high and pupils make good progress as a result.
- Leaders are fully aware that in the overall picture of good teaching, learning and assessment, there are particular strengths in some classes, for example in years 2, 3 and 6. Where this is the case, some pupils often make very rapid progress and achieve outstandingly well. However, there are not enough opportunities to share the best practice with staff across the school. The level of quality in teaching, learning and assessment is not yet consistent across the school.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils enjoy their time at school and said they think their teachers are 'phenomenal and imaginative'. They say that the school motto, 'Happy to learn, free to fly' is promoted well. A group of pupils agreed that they are encouraged to 'let our imagination go when we write out stories'.
- Pupils are confident and self-assured. They are proud of their school. When asked if there was anything they would like to improve, pupils were hard pressed to think of anything.
- Pupils are polite and friendly and respectful of adults and each other. They also have respect for the school environment and appreciate the considerable changes that have recently been made. Pupils show respect, tolerance and understanding for diversity in the school and in the wider community.
- Pupils understand about different types of bullying and said that any bullying was rare in school. They are confident to turn to adults, knowing that they will be listened to and that any incidents will be dealt with swiftly and fairly.
- Pupils say they feel very safe in school and know how to keep safe in a range of situations in and out of school. Events such as a presentation by a theatre company help pupils to have a good awareness of how to keep themselves safe on the roads. Pupils know how to keep safe when using the internet and other social media. Pupils led an assembly for parents to share their knowledge as part of a focus week on computing.
- Attendance has improved and is close to the national average. The school carefully tracks the attendance of different groups and individuals. Most pupils attend regularly. Leaders work effectively with parents and outside agencies to promote regular attendance for all.
- Pupils who attend the breakfast club get a safe, healthy and social start to their day. Attendance at the breakfast club has helped to ensure some pupils are more punctual to school.
- All parents who responded to the questionnaire agree that their children are happy at school and well looked after, and most agree that children feel safe.
- One parent wrote, 'The school and its amazing staff have all contributed to provide a wonderful start to my child's school career. The pastoral care at Hadlow is second to none and the progress my child has made is brilliant. I can't recommend this school highly enough'.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Almost all parents agree that the school makes sure pupils are well behaved.
- Pupils conduct themselves well in the playground, at lunchtimes and around the school. Sometimes behaviour is exemplary, as seen for example when pupils went out of school to conduct a traffic survey and collect and record data as part of their mathematics learning.
- Pupils are generally attentive in lessons, resilient in their learning and show good levels of concentration and perseverance to meet challenges. On occasion, however, some pupils need repeated reminders to focus on learning.
- School records confirm that behaviour is good over time. They also show that pupils who have specific behavioural needs are supported very well so that their behaviour improves.
- Senior leaders are closely monitoring the relatively new behaviour policy to ensure that it is consistently applied by staff throughout the school day.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Pupils' achievement has improved considerably since the previous inspection. By the end of Year 6, pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Standards are rising and for the past two years attainment has been significantly above that found nationally.
- Good outcomes for pupils currently in the school, in all year groups and in a range of subjects, are evident in the school's own assessment information, the work in pupils' books and displays of pupils' work around the school. Inspectors were impressed with the good quality of a range of artwork around the school and the quality of pupils' singing, led by the choir. Pupils also demonstrated their scientific knowledge by describing their work in a recent science week where they were challenged to be innovative scientists.
- In 2015, the proportions of pupils who made the expected and better than expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6, from their starting points at the end of Year 2, were above the national figures.
- Attainment by the end of Year 2 in 2015 was broadly average and stronger in reading and mathematics than in writing, which dipped from the previous year. Leaders have taken effective action to lift pupils' attainment in Key Stage 1. The deputy headteacher, who is an experienced, skilled teacher now teaches in Year 2 and works closely with the Year 1 teacher. As a result achievement for pupils currently in Key Stage 1 has improved, as shown by the assessment information and the work in pupils' books.
- The most-able pupils in all year groups are challenged to achieve well and make good progress. In 2015 in Year 2, the proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels in reading and mathematics was above the national average and broadly similar to the national picture in writing. In Year 6, there was an increase in the proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics.
- In the 2015 the proportion of pupils who reached the required level in the Year 1 phonics screening check was below average. (Phonics refers to letters and the sounds that they make.) Boys did considerably less well than girls. Leaders took rapid and effective action to improve phonics teaching and learning, including how it is planned and delivered, and all staff were involved in training. As a result, pupils now use their phonics skills well to help them read unfamiliar words. The proportion on track to reach the required level this year is much closer to the national average. Pupils who have moved into Year 2 are supported effectively to catch up.
- Pupils of all abilities enjoy reading. Pupils spoke with enthusiasm about a recent Book Week during which they were involved in a wide range of activities to grab their interest and motivate them to read. They develop as fluent, expressive readers who can explain their preferences for a range of authors and styles of writing. They develop good comprehension skills, as demonstrated by Year 6 pupils in their study of *The Hobbit*.
- Leaders have focused on writing, particularly to raise achievement for boys. They have ensured that writing tasks and activities consistently engage the interest of boys as much as girls through the planned topics. This was seen to good effect when pupils in Year 3 were learning to use figurative language in their descriptive writing based on *Harry Potter*. All pupils and particularly boys were motivated and attentive when watching a clip from the film and their descriptive writing was of a good quality.
- The mathematics curriculum has been revised and developed to improve outcomes for pupils by ensuring that pupils have opportunities to engage in problem solving and reasoning in lessons, which has helped

pupils continue to make good progress.

- In 2015 the attainment of disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 was above that of other pupils nationally and others in the school in reading, writing and mathematics. Leaders have focused intently on the outcomes for disadvantaged pupils in all year groups and monitor the impact of any additional support they receive. They have correctly identified the need to close the gap more rapidly between disadvantaged pupils and others in Key Stage 1.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability currently make broadly similar progress to others. Their needs are identified quickly and appropriate support is provided. In 2015, all pupils with special educational needs or disability made at least the expected progress by the end of Year 6.

Early years provision

is good

- Children start in the early years with skills and knowledge that are generally below those typical for their age, especially in their literacy and communication and language skills. From these starting points they make good progress and catch up quickly so that by the end of the Reception year they are adequately prepared to continue learning in Year 1.
- For the past three years the proportion of children who reached a good level of development by the end of the early years was above the national average, although it dipped in 2015 from the previous two years.
- Senior leaders quickly identified some weaknesses in the provision and are taking rapid and effective action to remedy this so that children continue to learn well. Initial changes have been made to the indoor and outdoor spaces. For example, there is now a canopy outside so that outdoor learning can take place regardless of inclement weather. Leaders are fully aware, however, that the organisation and physical layout of the classroom does not provide the same good-quality, stimulating learning environment as that seen in the rest of the school.
- Good teaching, learning and assessment ensure that the activities planned motivate and interest all children and boys in particular, as their achievement in 2015 was below that of girls, especially in writing and mathematics. As a result, boys and girls currently in the Reception class are making similar progress. Children's ideas are taken into account when planning themes and they are currently enjoying their space topic. One parent wrote, 'The topics and themes that are covered in class really engage my son and he thoroughly enjoys learning through these. We all know how hard it is to get boys loving writing and reading but his teacher has managed this.'
- Staff create a welcoming and safe atmosphere and ensure that all the safeguarding and welfare requirements appropriate to this age group are met. Children start the day happily and quickly settle into the routines of the day. They listen well to adults and are keen to learn.
- The teacher and teaching assistant know the children well. There are good procedures to get to know them and their families before they start at school. Good relationships with parents ensure they are well informed about their children's progress and can work in partnership with the school to support their children's learning. Adults promote children's independence well and have the same high expectations for behaviour, which is good.
- The role play area that becomes whatever the children want it to be provides good opportunities for children to develop their curiosity, imagination and creativity, as well as opportunities to write for a purpose.
- Children enjoy stories and teaching makes the most of this by using well-loved books as a starting point for learning. *Aliens Love Underpants*, for example, was used to help children learn about subtraction by removing underpants from a 'washing line' and seeing how many were left. Children had great fun and made good progress in their number work.
- Children's language and communication skills are promoted effectively when they choose activities for themselves. They are prompted to extend their thinking and vocabulary when they think about what they are going to do and why. On occasion, adults intervene too quickly and do not give children time to think about solving problems they encounter for themselves. For example, how they would solve the problem when the rocket they were building became too high for them to make it taller.
- The headteacher, deputy headteacher and the local authority provide effective support while the relatively new leader is developing her skills, to ensure that leadership in the early years successfully promotes and sustains children's good outcomes, assessment and progression in learning.

School details

Unique reference number	118273
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10002367

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	175
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Gill Brown
Headteacher	Richard Rule
Telephone number	01732 850349
Website	hadlow.kent.sch.uk
Email address	headteacher@hadlow.kent.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	11–12 December 2013

Information about this school

- Hadlow is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is above average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are supported by the pupil premium is above average. The pupil premium is additional government funding to support those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school provides a daily breakfast club.
- There is a Nursery on the school site but this is managed by a private provider and so not included in this inspection.
- Since the previous inspection there have been several changes in leadership. The previous headteacher left in April 2015. After this, leadership was conducted by two executive headteachers then a head of school until October 2015. From October to December 2015, the deputy headteacher led the school on a day-to-day basis, supported by the executive headteachers. The current headteacher joined as an interim headteacher in January 2016 and has been appointed as substantive headteacher from April 2016.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 13 lessons, some of which were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- Inspectors talked to pupils about their work and looked at the work in pupils' books. They observed pupils during assembly, at playtimes and lunchtimes and asked them for their views on the school. Inspectors also listened to some pupils read.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and other staff with key leadership responsibilities.
- Discussions were held with governors and two representatives of the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of documentation including: the school's own check on its performance and the quality of teaching; the school improvement plan; information on pupils' progress; and records relating to attendance, behaviour and safeguarding.
- Inspectors looked at 38 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, which included 27 written responses, and spoke to some parents at the start of the school day.
- Inspectors also took account of 23 questionnaires returned by staff.

Inspection team

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