

High Beech Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Mott Street, High Beach, Loughton, IG10 4AP

Inspection dates 9–10 October 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher and governors have improved teaching and pupils' achievement through strong leadership.
- Leaders rigorously analyse pupils' performance each term, and in national tests, to ensure no one is slipping behind and provide extra support where needed.
- Teachers and support staff are dedicated and constantly strive to make further improvements to their work. They undertake training, plan effectively, set out clear expectations for pupils and give them regular homework.
- Support for pupils who qualify for additional government funding is well used. These pupils make good progress as a result.
- The most able pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils enjoy their learning, are highly motivated and apply themselves well in class.
- Pupils are well mannered, and show courtesy and consideration to each other and to adults. They feel safe and know how to keep themselves safe. They are proud of their school.
- The school promotes pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural education well.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage provides a secure setting in which the children settle quickly and flourish.
- Governors are well informed and support the school effectively. They have a clear understanding of their role to support and hold leaders to account for the progress pupils make.
- Parents and staff are very supportive of the school, and show great confidence in its leadership.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Occasionally the work teachers set for the most able pupils is not sufficiently demanding, so they do not always make the best possible progress.
- Sometimes the presentation of pupils' work and handwriting is untidy.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector judged teaching by observing eight lessons and looking at the work in pupils' books, all carried out jointly with the headteacher, speaking to pupils in classrooms, in the playground and as a group, and listening to pupils reading.
- The inspector attended one whole-school assembly and one class assembly.
- The inspector looked at a wide range of documents relating to safeguarding, the school's evaluation of its own strengths and weaknesses and the monitoring of teaching.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, four governors, the Early Years Foundation Stage leader, other subject leaders and a representative from the local authority.
- Account was taken of 23 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and responses from 11 staff questionnaires.

Inspection team

Gillian Bosschaert, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than the average primary school.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported by school action, at around 11%, is above average. The proportion supported by school action plus, a statement of educational needs or the new education, health and care plan, at around 12%, is also above average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium is well below average. The pupil premium provides additional funding for pupils in local authority care and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The Reception class is taught as a full-time single unit of 15 children. The older pupils are taught in three mixed-age classes, each covering two year groups – Years 1/2, 3/4 and 5/6.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for progress and standards in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and achievement by making sure that:
 - teachers set more demanding work for the most able pupils so they make the best possible progress
 - pupils take more care with their handwriting and the presentation of their work.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, other leaders and governors work closely together to improve standards. They are fully aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, and have clearly identified the right areas for improvement. Their actions have improved pupils' achievement in recent years, demonstrating a proven capacity for further improvement.
- Leaders, teachers and teaching assistants are a collaborative team who have the best interests of the pupils at the heart of all they do. Pupils' attainment and progress are regularly monitored and any pupil in danger of falling behind is quickly identified and extra support provided.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are supported well and routinely monitored by the headteacher and other leaders to ensure that the support provided for them is effective.
- The very small number of pupils who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium are also carefully monitored, and make good progress because the money is used well to provide extra one-to-one support.
- Subject leaders are well trained and have prepared staff for the changes in the new national curriculum. They monitor their areas frequently and have written action plans that clearly identify the strengths and weaknesses in their subject. Leaders scrutinise pupils' books and visit classrooms regularly.
- The targets set for improving teachers' performance are closely linked to raising standards. Areas of weakness are being addressed, and the training provided links closely to the school's improvement priorities. As a result, pupils' progress has accelerated.
- The curriculum is being revised to meet the requirements of the new national curriculum and to ensure that pupils develop a good understanding of life in modern Britain. Topics are being carefully organised in a two-year cycle to ensure breadth and to fully cater for the mixed-age classes.
- The national primary school sports funding is used very effectively. Some is used to ensure that all pupils from Years 2 to 6 have access to swimming lessons. Key Stage 2 pupils are taught canoeing, kayaking and mountain bike riding. This has contributed to pupils having healthier lifestyles and greater self-confidence. The school recently won the local swimming gala against much larger schools.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is promoted well. The headteacher works closely with the local vicar, who visits the whole school regularly. Other visitors have included a female member of the Islamic culture and faith. She was able to discuss openly with the pupils her religion and answer their questions relating to the Muslim way of life. A variety of African and Indian musicians have demonstrated drumming. The pupils raise money for charities including supporting a school in Tanzania. During assembly pupils wrote poetry in the same genre as Benjamin Zephaniah, the British Rastafarian poet.
- Parents are kept informed via the school website, a weekly bulletin and curriculum meetings to explain teaching methods. Two parents from each class are representatives of the parent body. They regularly communicate with the headteacher and governors and report back to other parents.
- The headteacher and a nominated governor regularly check to make sure that safeguarding arrangements are effective. They ensure that all statutory requirements are met, including training all staff in child protection issues and first aid.
- The local authority has provided training for subject leaders and the early years leader. This has helped to raise standards and improve teaching.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governors now play a full part in supporting the school to raise standards. They visit frequently to

gain first-hand information about the school's performance, and compare their school against similar schools nationally in order to challenge leaders. They attend workshop evenings and have responded to parental requests for ways to help pupils at home by changing the school website.

- Governors have had an active role in formulating the school development plan. They are keen to develop the whole child and have used some of the sports funding to buy mountain bikes and a tutor to enable pupils to ride through Epping Forest as part of being 'Fit for Life'. They carefully monitor the impact of all additional funding, including the pupil premium, on raising standards.
- The governors manage the performance of the headteacher very effectively and ensure that systems to manage the performance of staff are robust. They are aware of any underperformance by pupils or staff, and hold leaders to account for the quality of teaching and the impact on achievement.
- A nominated governor makes half-termly visits to check the safety of the premises with the headteacher. All governors attend training courses regularly.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are consistently polite and courteous and display excellent manners. They greet visitors readily and are eager to hold doors open for them. Pupils clearly take great pride in this aspect of their behaviour. There is mutual respect between pupils and adults.
- Pupils are highly motivated and enthusiastic about all subjects. They maintain this eagerness to learn with all staff. This contributes to their good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils are very socially aware, caring for each other well. This was seen in assembly when team points were announced. The teams which were not first with the highest marks spontaneously congratulated the team leaders for the winning team. Pupils take on other responsibilities well and older pupils help in the dining hall to serve drinks to younger pupils. The pupils have also organised a Mother's Day tea and a Father's Day breakfast.
- Incidents of poor behaviour and racism are very rare. Logs are kept but contain only one or two minor squabbles over the past year. Pupils play well together in the playground and look after each other should anyone fall and hurt themselves. Pupils say that behaviour is good. This is supported by staff and parents who responded to questionnaires.
- Pupils say that they enjoy school and want to attend, and this is confirmed by above-average attendance. No pupils have been excluded.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Safeguarding procedures are robust and all members of staff receive regular training. Pupils consistently report that they feel safe. They understand how to stay safe online and speak knowledgeably about this.

The quality of teaching is good

- Leaders maintain a strong focus on improving teaching, and teachers speak highly of the training they receive. Pupils respond well to their teachers, commenting, 'They are really friendly. If we are stuck, they help us.' 'Teachers make lessons really interesting'.
- Teachers regularly check on how well pupils are doing and discuss this with colleagues with the leaders responsible for mathematics and reading and writing. The school has implemented a new marking policy to help pupils understand how to move their work forward. This is being used consistently.
- Teachers across the school show that they have good subject knowledge. They give clear explanations which enable pupils to start work quickly. Teachers use learning time efficiently to ensure that pupils make good progress and they set homework regularly.

- Teachers provide clear explanations of the linguistic features that pupils can use in their writing. They ensure that able pupils are challenged at the right level of difficulty. However, the most able pupils are not always enabled to quickly move on to more challenging work. They sometimes spend time listening to what they already know before starting work and this slows their progress a little.
- To provide further challenge for the most able pupils, a secondary mathematics teacher is employed for part of the week. This has helped to increase the number of pupils who reach the highest levels in the end-of-key-stage tests for mathematics.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are helped and guided by well-informed teaching assistants, who in turn are supported by the senior teacher responsible for these pupils' education.
- Teachers have rightly concentrated on improving what pupils are reading and writing about, and how much writing they manage to produce. Pupils' books show a growing quality and quantity of work. However, teachers do not always make sure it is well presented, especially by the older children when they convert from writing in pencil to using a pen.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children enter the school with knowledge and skills which are broadly in line with those expected for their age, and make rapid progress. By the end of Year 2, all pupils reach the standards expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics and a significant number exceed these expectations. This has been an improving trend since 2011, when the headteacher took up her post.
- The proportions of pupils making and exceeding expected progress across Key Stage 2 also compare favourably with national averages. The proportion exceeding expected progress in mathematics and reading increased further in 2014. Although the data should be treated with caution because of the small number of pupils involved, they also show a marked increase in the number of pupils who reached the higher levels in mathematics, spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- The very small numbers of disadvantaged pupils who are supported by the pupil premium also make good progress. This is because they are carefully monitored and given individual help. There have been too few eligible pupils in Year 6 to make detailed judgements on their attainment without risk of identifying individuals, but the attainment gap between these pupils and their classmates is closing.
- The small number of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils who read to the inspectors were reading books at the appropriate level of challenge for their ability. They made good attempts to use their basic knowledge of letters and sounds to split and build unknown words. Older pupils were able to talk excitedly about their enjoyment for reading and discuss different authors. They were able to talk about visiting the local library and joining in various assignments organised by the library. The standard of reading is good.
- The most able pupils make good progress. They do particularly well in mathematics. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels in spelling, grammar and punctuation and reading increased in 2014. However, at times a few pupils do not have enough challenging work, or start to work at the more challenging levels quickly enough to make even better progress and reach the highest levels of attainment.

The early years provision is good

- Children have a good introduction to learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children make good progress due to the wide range of well-planned activities available to them, both indoors and outside. This

ensures they are well equipped to begin the next stage in their education.

- Relationships are very good so children feel safe and well supported and can learn happily. Adults use good questioning skills to develop children's language and logical thinking skills; behaviour is good and routines are well established.
- Teaching of the sounds letters make (phonics) is an integral part of each day. Children have opportunities to play with letters in the creative area, where play dough is popular. Sound boxes keep children aware of the initial sounds to words.
- Children move easily from inside to outside area activities. The outside area is well resourced and has a fenced area used as a 'forest school', giving children ample opportunity to explore their environment and develop physically. This mini-forest is a magical place for the children to play harmoniously together and to understand and communicate with nature. This provides a spiritual dimension to their play.
- Leadership and management of the early years provision are good, and children are well looked after. Daily risk assessments of the outside area and the forest school ensure children are kept safe at all times. Learning journals kept for each child give photographic and written evidence of their development and progress. These are shared with parents.
- Disadvantaged children and those who have disabilities or special educational needs are identified quickly and external advice sought immediately, sometimes before they start in September. This helps to ensure that they receive appropriate support.

What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	115096
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	448669

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	105
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Julia Van Niekerk
Headteacher	Julie Harper
Date of previous school inspection	14 June 2010
Telephone number	020 8508 6048
Fax number	020 8532 0161
Email address	admin@highbeech.essex.sch.uk

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