

Hatfield Heath Primary School

Hatfield Heath, Bishop's Stortford, Hertfordshire CM22 7EA

Inspection dates

8–9 January 2019

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	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The recently appointed headteacher and leadership team have led dramatic improvement in most areas of provision. The impact of these improvements is already seen.
- Leaders can demonstrate the positive difference they have made to the quality of teaching in all key stages. As a result, pupils' progress is improving strongly.
- Morale is high. Staff, pupils and the overwhelming majority of parents praise the headteacher's work.
- The multi-academy trust (MAT) and the governing body have a good understanding of the work of the school. They provide good levels of challenge and support to leaders.
- The curriculum is exciting and engaging. It encourages pupils' appetite for learning across a wide range of subjects.
- Children in the early years settle quickly into school routines and become confident learners. They benefit from effective teaching which is matched to their needs. Therefore, they make good progress.
- Teachers are enthusiastic and use their strong subject knowledge to plan activities which interest pupils and broaden their understanding.
- The teaching of phonics is effective in providing pupils with early reading skills.
- Across the school, pupils express a love of reading. Leaders nurture this passion effectively by ensuring that pupils have a wide range of reading material.
- Pupils behave well during lessons and during social times. They are cooperative and behave respectfully towards each other and staff.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is good. Pupils receive support which enables them to make good progress.
- The vast majority of pupils attend school regularly and are punctual to lessons. They feel safe and well cared for.
- Some leaders who are new to their roles have not yet had time and opportunity to develop their skills fully.
- Pupils' outcomes are below where they should be for their age. This is the result of previous weaknesses in provision.
- The quality of teaching has improved strongly and is now good. There is a great level of consistency in approach. This is helping pupils to catch up towards where they should be. However, the level of challenge for pupils of different abilities is not always appropriate.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop leadership and management by further strengthening the skills of leaders new in post through training and support provided by the MAT.
- Improve pupils' outcomes by ensuring that work is sufficiently challenging so that all pupils make rapid progress.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher was appointed in September 2018. Since then, she has provided inspirational leadership that has resulted in improvements in the quality of teaching and learning, assessment, the curriculum and pupils' behaviour. Pupils are making better progress than they did last year.
- The school has experienced a period of turbulence in staffing. Much-needed stability is now in place and leaders have used professional development well to build leadership capacity.
- The headteacher is honest and accurate in her view of the school's current performance and is committed to taking every opportunity to build on this. Leaders, governors and the MAT have a clear and accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- The multi-academy trust provides good support to the school. The school's teachers also provide support to colleagues in other schools in the trust as well as schools in the local area.
- Leaders regularly check the quality of work in their areas and are fully aware of the school's priorities. They use monitoring information effectively to identify common areas that need to be addressed. They provide good support for staff in their area of specialism.
- Leaders spend pupil premium funding effectively to support the individual needs of the small number of disadvantaged pupils. This includes additional academic support as well as access to educational visits. Leaders check carefully on the difference this spending makes to ensure that disadvantaged pupils make good progress.
- There is a successful strategy for the effective use of the physical education and sports additional funding. Leaders track pupils' participation in clubs and competitions carefully to ensure that all pupils participate. They use this information to target individual pupils and they tailor provision to appeal to pupils' preferences.
- The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) closely monitors the impact of the support provided, making adjustments where necessary. Staff are well equipped to support pupils with SEND. As a result, this group of pupils makes good progress.
- Leaders are passionate in their desire to provide a curriculum that motivates and inspires pupils to learn. They have planned the curriculum to give pupils opportunities to acquire new knowledge and skills across the different key stages. Leaders ensure that teachers plan for pupils to revisit and build on previous learning.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are promoted well through assemblies and lessons in art, music and religious education. Pupils are keen to help one another, and strong relationships throughout the school build trust and confidence.
- Leaders take every opportunity to teach pupils about British values. Leaders place particular emphasis on ensuring that pupils develop a secure understanding of different cultures and religions. Visits to synagogues and temples help pupils to develop understanding of communities and faith groups in modern Britain.

- The current leaders have worked hard to engage parents in the life of the school. As a result, parents are highly supportive. The vast majority would recommend the school.
- Staff are overwhelmingly supportive of the headteacher, summed up by a typical comment: 'The improvement from September to now has been excellent.' Staff say leaders encourage them to be innovative and improve their professional and personal skills to develop their careers.
- The school's leaders have a good relationship with the local authority who provide helpful support and guidance when required.
- Leaders new to their position have not yet had sufficient time and training to gain a sharp understanding of their role.

Governance of the school

- Governance is strong and well organised. The school has been through a period of turbulence, during which pupils' educational standards declined. Governors have acted swiftly and with determination to secure improvements after the recent decline in pupils' progress across key stage 1 and key stage 2.
- Governors bring a good range of knowledge and skills to their roles. They visit the school regularly to gain an accurate understanding of pupils' experiences and how well pupils are learning. Governors also help to ensure that staff implement agreed policies and procedures.
- Governors provide appropriate challenge to leaders. They receive detailed, clear information from leaders and are skilled at interrogating this. As a result, they have a secure understanding of priorities for improvement and leaders' effectiveness in undertaking actions to achieve these.
- Governors ensure that leaders spend the pupil premium funding and the physical education and sports premium funding effectively.
- There is a close and effective relationship between the MAT trustees and the local governing board.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders ensure that appropriate checks are made on adults who work in the school and on visitors or volunteers. Records of these checks are accurate and organised efficiently.
- Staff have established good communication with parents and external agencies should they be worried about a pupil. As a result, pupils and their families receive valuable support. Detailed records are maintained.
- All staff have training on safeguarding, at a level appropriate to their role. Staff are fully aware of what they need to do if they have any concerns about a pupil's safety or welfare.
- Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe in school. They said that they have confidence in staff to address any concerns that they might have. Pupils are taught how to stay safe in a range of contexts, including when online.

- The vast majority of parents that responded to the online survey, Parent View, stated that their children feel safe, and that they are happy and well looked after at school. The school's own internal questionnaires completed by parents demonstrate that the school does all that it can to ensure that pupils are safe and secure.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers gather accurate information about pupils' starting points and they use this to plan lessons which extend pupils' knowledge and skills.
- Teachers have great enthusiasm for the subjects they teach. They have good subject knowledge. Careful planning results in lesson time being used productively. Teachers use questioning skilfully to challenge pupils and to encourage them to think more deeply.
- Teachers regularly reinforce high expectations of pupils' conduct in class. Teachers provide clear guidance about the tasks they set. As a result, pupils apply themselves well during the lessons. They show resilience when solving problems and work with positive attitudes to their learning.
- The teaching of phonics is a strength of the school. By the end of key stage 1, almost all children are adept at using phonics to work out unfamiliar words. Most pupils develop into successful readers. Pupils who spoke to one of the inspectors said that they enjoy reading, enjoy choosing books for themselves, and read widely and often.
- The teaching of writing is good. Teachers plan sequences of lessons carefully to build the skills which pupils then apply to extended pieces of writing. Pupils are motivated because teachers use high-quality texts linked to their interests as models to stimulate pupils' ideas. There is a well-resourced library that helps pupils increase their vocabulary due to the wide selection of reading age books available.
- Pupils benefit from having frequent opportunities to use their writing skills in a wide range of subjects. Pupils make good progress which is evident in their vocabulary choices and sentence construction.
- The teaching of mathematics has improved. Teachers provide regular opportunities for pupils to practise calculation skills. They also challenge pupils to apply their knowledge and skills to investigate and solve problems. The work seen in pupils' books shows that current pupils are making good progress.
- Teaching in the wider curriculum is effective. For example, inspectors saw good work in science and geography. Teachers support pupils to reflect on their work and learn from their mistakes. As a result, pupils make good progress. The curriculum is enriched by a wide range of extra-curricular activities, to develop pupils' self-esteem and social skills.
- Teaching support assistants are highly skilled and used to good effect. Those who support pupils with SEND make a vital difference in enabling them to have access to the curriculum and progress well.
- Teachers skilfully display pupils' work in the corridor and in the classroom to encourage positive attitudes and to provide learning prompts and ideas. Pupils said that they were proud of their work.
- Occasionally, work is too easy for some pupils and lacks challenge. Sometimes, staff

are too slow to recognise that pupils are ready to move on because they have already understood the key aspect of learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are polite, friendly, confident and proud of their school. Pupils were keen to tell inspectors that they enjoy attending school, appreciate their teachers and the range of opportunities provided for them.
- Pupils are looked after well. Dedicated staff ensure that there is a nurturing and caring environment in the school. Excellent relationships between staff and pupils mean that pupils feel confident and self-assured.
- Leaders place good emphasis on pupils' personal and social development. Pupils benefit from opportunities to hone their leadership skills, for example in their role as a student council representative. Pupils are considerate of the needs of others and support one another well.
- The school offers a wide range of trips, visitors to school and extra-curricular opportunities. These contribute well to pupils' personal development.
- Pupils understand how to eat healthily. They can describe the types of food that constitute healthy living. They understand some of the basic elements of living a healthy lifestyle.
- The school environment makes a strong contribution to pupils' well-being. Attractive open spaces for physical activity are balanced by quiet, calm spaces for reflection.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are well mannered and courteous. They wear their uniforms with pride. They are well behaved around school. At breaktime and lunchtime, they cooperate with each other and show respect for their peers.
- The displays of pupils' work create a welcoming and motivational place for pupils to learn. Pupils respect all areas of the school and appreciate their achievements are valued and visibly celebrated by their teachers.
- Pupils' conduct is mature, sensible and reliable. This contributes to the smooth running of the school. They respond well to high expectations set for their behaviour and to the consistent implementation of well-established routines.
- Pupils understand the different forms that bullying can take. They say that the incidents of bullying or poor behaviour are extremely rare but when they do happen, staff act swiftly to resolve any issue.
- Parents who spoke with inspectors and the majority of parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, agreed that the school ensures that pupils are well behaved.

- All pupils spoken to said they enjoy school. Their attendance is broadly in line with the national average. Few pupils are persistently absent. Leaders check on pupils' attendance regularly and follow up patterns of absence rigorously.
- There have been no exclusions for the present academic year.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Following some years of decline, in summer 2018 progress from key stage 1 to key stage 2 was very low. Pupils did not make the progress they should in reading, writing and mathematics. In addition, too few pupils achieved the standard expected for their age in writing.
- In 2018, attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 1 was below where it should be. Although current pupils are still not where they need to be, the signs of improving outcomes are clear. New leaders have made changes that are helping pupils to make better progress, leading to rising attainment.
- Standards in Year 1 phonics are strong. In 2017 and 2018 the proportion of pupils who achieved the expected standard was above the national average. Current pupils are on target to attain at similar levels.
- The work that inspectors saw in pupils' books during this inspection was of a good standard. Inspectors saw examples of pupils writing at length and for different purposes and audiences. Pupils are making good progress in their writing development.
- Current pupils are making better progress in mathematics. Work in pupils' books shows that teachers' expectations are high and that pupils receive good levels of challenge in this subject. Teachers provide regular opportunities for pupils to practise and develop calculation skills. Pupils' work also shows that they are developing problem-solving skills well.
- As the result of improving teaching, pupils currently in the school are making stronger progress than previously. This is the case in most years and in both English and mathematics. Pupils with SEND and those who are disadvantaged are increasingly well supported in making gains in their learning.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress. This is because staff make effective provision for these pupils' individual needs.
- Leaders have raised the profile of reading across the school. Pupils read confidently in different subject areas. Pupils also make better progress and develop their knowledge and skills in a range of other subjects, such as geography and science.

Early years provision

Good

- Children start the early years with skills that are broadly typical for their age. By the time they leave the Reception Year, most reach a good level of development and are well prepared for key stage 1. The proportion of children who exceed expectations for their age in reading, writing and mathematics is often above the national average.
- The early years leader has an accurate understanding of her role and provides good support for the early years team. Staff build a comprehensive picture of what children

can do when they start in Reception. The early years leader ensures that children's progress is tracked accurately and has worked successfully to develop good relationships with parents.

- Teaching in the early years is highly effective. Adults use the assessment information they have gathered to target learning activities with care. This approach is highly effective in ensuring that teachers plug any gaps in learning and contributes to the good progress that children make.
- Phonics teaching in the early years is particularly effective. Children participate well in adult-led sessions and benefit from regular opportunities to consolidate learning. As a result, they develop the skills they need to decode words quickly.
- Children behave well. They move decisively between tasks, work well with one another and maintain concentration on the interesting activities on offer. This prepares them well for more formal schooling in later years.
- Strong relationships exist between adults and children. Children have the confidence to be curious because the reply they receive from adults is supportive in helping them to develop further skills. These positive reactions encourage the development of children's communication skills and self-esteem as well as creating a productive atmosphere in which they flourish.
- Children feel safe in the early years. They collaborate well with each other and with the adults who teach them. They are well looked after, and safeguarding is effective. Adults carefully reflect on the risks associated with various activities and are proactive in maintaining a secure environment.
- Parents appreciate the early years provision. They value the frequent communication with staff and receive constructive information concerning their child's progress.

School details

Unique reference number	141714
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10085489

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	214
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Diane Hancock
Headteacher	Elisabeth Gelston
Telephone number	01279 730382
Website	www.hatfieldheath.essex.sch.uk
Email address	admin@hatfieldheath.essex.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	9 October 2008

Information about this school

- Hatfield Heath Primary School is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The current headteacher took up her post in September 2018.
- The school is part of the Learning Partnership Trust. Although the multi-academy trust's board of trustees is legally the responsible body, the school retains a local governing body. This holds the school's leaders to account for the effectiveness of teaching, learning and assessment, as well as pupils' progress, outcomes and safeguarding.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is lower than in the average primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is lower than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEND is higher than the national average. The

proportion of pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan is in line with the national average.

- The proportion of pupils for speak English as an additional language is below the national average.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was initially scheduled as a one-day inspection carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors, following concerns about the school's performance. The inspection converted to a full inspection completed by three of Her Majesty's Inspectors on the following day.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and other leaders, teaching staff, a group of pupils formally, members of the governing body and the chief executive officer of the Learning Partnership Trust.
- Pupils were spoken to informally at lunchtime, breaktime and in classes.
- Telephone conversations were held with a representative of the local authority and the chair of governors.
- Inspectors spoke with parents at the beginning of the school day.
- As this inspection began as a one-day inspection, there were no formal surveys completed by parents, staff or pupils. Consequently, inspectors used existing evidence on Parent View. Furthermore, inspectors questioned a number of staff across the school about the provision and took into account the results of an internal staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors considered one letter received from a parent and analysed 35 responses from parents to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View.
- Inspectors observed teaching and learning across all year groups with leaders.
- Information was considered relating to the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans, pupils' achievement, the curriculum, safeguarding, the external work of agencies with the school, pupils' attendance and behaviour.

Inspection team

Stefanie Lipinski-Barltrop, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Adrian Lyons	Her Majesty's Inspector
Al Mistrano	Her Majesty's Inspector

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