

# Houghton Primary School

Chapel Lane, Houghton, Huntingdon, PE28 2AY

**Inspection dates** 27–28 February 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Pupils make good progress across the school.
- Standards in Year 2 and Year 6 are above average in English and mathematics.
- Leaders' focus on helping each individual pupil to succeed, whatever their needs, has been successful.
- Teaching is good and sometimes outstanding.
- The contribution of teaching assistants to pupils' learning is a particular strength of the school.
- Pupils have plenty of opportunities to practise their English and mathematics skills in different subjects.
- Pupils behave well and say they feel safe in school. They enjoy school and their high attendance reflects this.
- The headteacher's outstanding leadership has been the catalyst that has enabled leaders, managers and governors to improve teaching and raise achievement since the previous inspection.
- The governing body knows the school well and governors bring a good range of expertise so that they are in a strong position to hold leaders to account for the school's performance.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils are not always clear about what they need to do to be successful in lessons so that they understand how much progress they have made.
- Some marking is inconsistent because it does not always show pupils how to improve their work, especially in mathematics.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 17 lessons or parts of lessons including some jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspection team heard pupils read and, with the headteacher, looked closely at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspectors looked at a wide range of school documents, including development plans, policies, self-evaluation reports, monitoring files, safeguarding and curriculum materials, evidence of the school's partnership work and information for families.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils chosen at random. Discussions were held with senior leaders, subject leaders, teachers and other staff, the Vice Chair of the Governing Body and other governors, and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors took account of the 96 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and spoke informally to parents in the playground.
- The inspectors considered the staff questionnaires that were completed.

## Inspection team

Nick Butt, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Stuart Edmonds

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school. It is located close to the River Great Ouse.
- Most pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium (which in this school provides additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals) is well below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus, or with a statement of special educational needs, is also below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The school manages a before- and after-school club, the Phoenix Club.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Move teaching from good to outstanding by making sure that:
  - pupils clearly understand what they need to do to be successful in their learning in lessons so they can understand how much progress they have made
  - marking consistently shows pupils how to improve their work, especially in mathematics.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils achieve well in each year group because teaching is consistently good. They join the Reception class with skills which are typical for this age but often with strengths in social development and language.
- Children make good progress in Reception because staff know the children well as individuals and plan activities that interest them and make them think. This means that children are well prepared for Year 1.
- Pupils continue to do well in Key Stage 1, so that standards are above average by the end of Year 2. Phonics (the sounds that letters make) are well taught. The proportion of Year 1 pupils reaching the required standard in the annual reading check compares favourably with the national picture.
- The school's own information shows that pupils make good progress across all year groups and that their current attainment is above average.
- In 2013 in Year 6 there was a dip in standards in writing and mathematics to average, even though standards in reading were above average. The school has tackled this by focusing on the needs of each individual pupil, indentifying gaps in their knowledge and understanding, and working to fill them rapidly. The impact of this has been considerable, with accelerated rates of progress in both writing and mathematics. The current Year 6 pupils are on course to reach above average standards.
- This approach is also proving successful for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, who have made particularly good progress in reading and writing. Their progress in mathematics has not been quite so strong because the impact of the changes made by leaders is taking longer to bear fruit.
- The use of online activities to support mathematics and reading has been especially successful. Pupils enjoy the challenge of competing against their classmates and other pupils in other schools both in this country and abroad. The school has recently adopted an online spelling programme too, which is also having a positive impact on pupils' progress.
- A new mathematical calculations policy has been applied consistently across the school, and this has contributed greatly to pupils' good progress in mathematics, as they learn new skills systematically and solve problems efficiently.
- A small number of pupils are supported by the pupil premium. In 2013 there were too few to mention, but their progress across the school is good. This is because pupils' needs are very clearly identified and the necessary support is tailored to meet them. There are no significant gaps in the attainment of any groups of pupils.
- The school makes sure that the most-able pupils receive work that is of sufficient difficulty to enable them to reach the higher levels of attainment.

**The quality of teaching is good**

- Teaching is consistently good and sometimes outstanding. Pupils work with a clear purpose and engage well with learning. They are used to sharing their ideas with one another and with the class, so that they can benefit from the fruitful discussions which occur.
- Teaching assistants are highly skilled and trained well. They are very well briefed and fully included in planning activities for pupils and in assessing how well they have completed them. As a consequence, the impact of their work is considerable, and this contributes in no small way to pupils' good progress.
- Teachers are adept at grouping pupils so as to help them to get the most out of learning, paying particular attention to how they have been progressing. In this way pupils who need additional support are identified and helped, and pupils who are ready to be moved on in their learning are given more demanding work to do.
- Books show that pupils make good progress over time. They take pride in the presentation of their work. The quality of topic work is good in many classes, with opportunities for pupils to apply their English, mathematics and communication skills in a range of subjects. For example, Year 5 and 6 pupils were given a budget and had to design different types of bridges to cross different sections of the river. They were able to apply their skills of calculation, design and technology, and their knowledge of rivers in order to write a brief about their bridge.
- Teachers regularly spend time individually with pupils reviewing their progress in reading, writing, mathematics and behaviour and agreeing what they need to focus on to reach the next level of attainment so that they can set goals. This makes pupils very well aware of how they are doing and motivates them to progress rapidly.
- At times in lessons, teachers do not make clear to pupils how they can be successful in a particular aspect of learning so that they can judge their progress and this means they do not do as well as they could. While teachers' marking of writing is consistently good, they do not explain so clearly to pupils how they can improve their work in mathematics.

**The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils behave well in class and around the school. Parents, pupils and staff all have a positive view of behaviour. They give examples of how the school rewards and deals with behaviour. Pupils understand very clearly how the behaviour system works and enjoy earning rewards.
- The school supports successfully pupils who sometimes find it difficult to socialise. They do this both through organised clubs and the use of pupils as 'peer mediators' and 'play leaders'. Incidents of racist and homophobic language are rare and if they do occur they are dealt with quickly and decisively. Discrimination in any form is not permitted.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are positive and they work well in groups and pairs as well as on their own. The school has a purposeful buzz to it as you walk around. There are very few incidents of low-level disruption.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say they feel safe and identify ways to keep safe. Pupils have excellent manners and are very welcoming and friendly. They have an awareness of bullying and are confident they can raise any concerns with staff safe in

the knowledge that they will be treated seriously and acted upon promptly.

- Pupils' awareness of cyber bullying and e-safety is developing but they are not always sure of the difference and how best to respond to situations that may arise outside school.
- The school has launched an innovative approach to helping girls succeed in friendships to reduce any possible 'falling out', which has been identified as a concern in the past. This is led by the headteacher and helps girls to deal with unkind behaviour and to know the forms it can take.
- Pupils who attend the Phoenix before- and after-school club benefit from healthy food and well-organised activities, and socialise well together.
- Attendance has improved and is well above average, reflecting pupils' enjoyment of school.

### **The leadership and management are good**

- The headteacher's outstanding leadership has created a dynamic and cohesive school where morale is extremely high and all pupils have equal opportunities to succeed. All staff know the school's aims and the role they play in meeting them. Parents are very positive about the headteacher's availability and the fact that she is out at the school gate to greet them come rain or shine.
- School leaders are very ambitious to move the school to outstanding and have introduced key changes to raise pupils' achievement and improve teaching. The approach of treating each pupil as an individual and responding flexibly to their needs in the light of their progress has been a particular success. This is having a positive impact and is leading to a greater consistency of teaching. Leaders, managers and governors recognise that there is more to do to maintain good or better progress and keep standards high over a long period of time.
- The school's view of its effectiveness is accurate. The checking of the school's work is rigorous. Teachers are given clear feedback about how to improve their practice and improvement points are followed up. The management of their performance is thorough. Increases in pay are related to pupils making good or better progress.
- Subject leaders are being developed well. They have a good knowledge of their areas and are given the opportunity to lead whole-school initiatives, such as the introduction of the new calculations policy.
- The subjects the school offers cater well for pupils' interests and aspirations. A recent topic on 'family history' proved very popular and enabled pupils to delve back into their past. Each pupil was able to fill a shoebox with family mementoes, and write about the memories they evoked. The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Pupils have strong sense of what is right and take a pride in their work. The school is brought to life with attractive displays of pupils' work.
- The primary school sport funding is being spent on training for teachers, including developing their expertise in teaching swimming. It has also been used to increase the range of sports clubs the school offers and to support the school's involvement in the local sports partnership and participation in tournaments. The impact of this is that pupils have more opportunities to take part in sport and teachers are more confident at teaching it. This has a beneficial impact on pupils' health and well-being.

■ Parents are very happy with the school's work. A high proportion responded to Parent View, and all said their children are happy at school, are kept safe and that the teaching is good. Almost all would recommend the school to other parents.

■ The local authority gives minimal support. The school gets external help from a range of providers, including the local authority as required.

■ **The governance of the school:**

– Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas to develop. They know how well the performance of pupils compares with those in other schools, and what the quality of teaching is like. Governors bring a wide range of expertise to the school, and visit often to check on its work. They understand how the management of teachers' performance works and what the school is doing to reward good teaching. Governors know how the pupil premium is being spent and the impact it is having. They make sure that safeguarding arrangements fully meet all statutory requirements. Governors use their knowledge to ask searching questions of the headteacher and other leaders.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	110680
<b>Local authority</b>	Cambridgeshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	431240

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	199
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Amanda Waughman
<b>Headteacher</b>	Georgina Young
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	25 February 2009
<b>Telephone number</b>	01480 463398
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