

# Hillcross Primary School

Ashridge Way, Morden, Surrey SM4 4EE

## Inspection dates

21–22 February 2018

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The headteacher, ably supported by the leadership team, is rightly focusing on improving pupils' rates of progress.
- The leadership team, including governors, has a clear understanding of what needs to be done to further improve the school.
- Leaders ensure that the curriculum fosters the school's core values. Pupils respect themselves and others and are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Pupils are confident and articulate. They are keen to discuss their learning. Pupils feel safe in school. They know that adults will help them should they have any concerns.
- Pupils behave well and are eager to learn. There is a strong sense of harmony and respect in this community.
- Most pupils currently in the school are making good or improving progress from their starting points in English and mathematics.
- Leaders have implemented well-targeted and effective training for teachers. As a result, teaching is good.
- The majority of parents and carers are positive about the school and appreciate how staff help their children learn well.
- Middle leaders are passionate and creative. They benefit from the range of development and training opportunities provided for them.
- The curriculum is enhanced by trips, visitors to the school, assemblies and extra-curricular clubs. As a result, pupils enjoy their learning.
- The early years provision enables children to make a good start to their education. The early years curriculum is well designed and ensures that children are ready for Year 1.
- Teaching and learning of English and mathematics are good and improving because leaders are making effective checks and providing useful training.
- Although pupils are getting increasingly frequent opportunities to practise their problem-solving skills in mathematics, there are fewer opportunities for pupils to practise their reasoning skills.
- Pupils' progress in the wider curriculum is not closely monitored by leaders. As a result, there are variations in the rates of progress that pupils make in subjects other than English and mathematics.
- Leaders monitor the progress of most groups of pupils effectively. However, the progress of the most able pupils is not carefully analysed. This contributes to the most able not making consistently good progress.

## Full report

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

- Accelerate progress for the most able pupils by:
  - carefully analysing their progress
  - providing learning opportunities that are more demanding in lessons.
- Improve pupils' progress in subjects other than English and mathematics by systematically analysing and tracking pupils' progress across the wider curriculum.
- Provide pupils with more reasoning opportunities within mathematics lessons to apply their well-rehearsed number and calculation skills.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- The headteacher has been instrumental in creating a nurturing yet ambitious school culture. She is well supported by a strong leadership team. Together, they are working to make improvements in the school.
- School leaders have an accurate understanding of where teaching is strongest and where additional support is required. They use this information to improve teachers' practice and provide good support to staff.
- Leaders are working effectively to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and pupils' outcomes. Leaders ensure that training is available for all staff, including newly qualified teachers. Professional development opportunities are carefully linked to teachers' personal targets and the school's priorities for improvement.
- Middle leaders are contributing effectively to school improvement. They observe learning and scrutinise pupils' work in order to improve pupils' outcomes.
- The curriculum is enhanced with a wealth of extra activities in order to inspire and motivate pupils' learning. Additional activities include trips out, visitors to the school and visits to museums and galleries. These activities help pupils to learn new skills and contribute positively to their personal and academic achievement.
- Teachers are adept at questioning pupils so that they develop their critical-thinking skills. Consequently, pupils articulate well-reasoned views on a range of topics.
- The school's core values underpin its vision and ethos. Staff model these values well, which supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The development of pupils' well-being is threaded throughout the curriculum. Assemblies and the personal, social, health and economics (PSHE) education curriculum further contribute towards pupils building good relationships and developing their resilience.
- Pupils take part in elections for the school council and learn about democracy. They become aware of different faiths through studying different cultures and festivals, as well as visiting places of worship. These experiences help pupils gain a deeper understanding of British values and the diversity of faiths that make up modern Britain.
- The primary school physical education and sport premium is spent well. It is used to improve teachers' skills in teaching physical education and provide more sports clubs for pupils. As a result, teachers are improving their own skills, and pupils enjoy taking part in a wide range of sporting activities. These increased opportunities contribute to pupils' understanding of how to live healthily.
- Leaders ensure that additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils is thoughtfully used to support eligible pupils academically and emotionally. As a result, disadvantaged pupils are displaying positive attitudes to learning and making improving progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school provides well for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. Staff are well trained and are knowledgeable about individual pupils and their needs. Leaders evaluate the use of additional funding and ensure that pupils who

have SEN and/or disabilities receive effective support in lessons. Consequently, these pupils are making good progress.

- School leaders have given much consideration to planning the curriculum. They have developed topics or themes to stimulate pupils' imaginations and engage them in their learning. This helps pupils to gain a broader understanding of the subjects they learn. However, leaders do not check pupils' progress closely in subjects other than English and mathematics. This results in pupils making inconsistent progress in the wider curriculum.

### **Governance of the school**

- Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. They hold leaders to account for pupils' outcomes and the quality of teaching by asking challenging questions.
- The governing body is well organised. Governors' skills and expertise are used well to support and challenge leaders.
- Governors undertake appropriate training to fulfil their responsibilities effectively.
- Governors ensure that extra funding for disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities is used well and is having a positive effect on pupils' progress.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Staff know how to keep pupils safe at school. They are clear about safeguarding procedures, including the potential signs that may alert them to concerns about pupils' welfare.
- Pupils say that they feel safe, and the majority of parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, say that their children are safe at school.
- School files for vulnerable pupils are well organised. Record-keeping is effective, and the designated safeguarding lead has clear systems in place to ensure that referrals are timely and additional support is available to pupils and families.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

**Good**

- Adults establish positive relationships with pupils and expect good behaviour. Pupils respond well to their teachers. Their positive attitudes to learning contribute to the good progress that most pupils are making in English and mathematics.
- Classrooms are calm and well organised, enabling pupils to learn in a purposeful environment.
- Teaching assistants are well deployed to work with pupils who need help to catch up. They ask good questions and provide effective support to the pupils that they work with. Consequently, these pupils are making good progress from their starting points.

- In English, pupils explore different styles of writing and write for a variety of purposes. Pupils are given opportunities to apply their spelling and grammar skills in their writing.
- Reading is taught well. Pupils across the school enjoy reading. The teaching of phonics is systematic and helps pupils to get off to a good start in reading. Pupils use their phonic skills to decode unknown words, and talk enthusiastically about their favourite authors.
- The teaching of mathematics is good. Teachers ensure that pupils are fluent in their basic mathematical skills and provide plentiful opportunities for pupils to develop their problem-solving skills. However, pupils' reasoning skills in mathematics are less consistently developed.
- Work set for the most able pupils does not demand enough of them. Too often, the most able pupils waste time doing work that is too easy before they start more challenging tasks. Consequently, this slows these pupils from making consistently good progress.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils display positive attitudes to their learning. They concentrate well and are keen to learn.
- Pupils are confident and articulate. They were eager to share their views with inspectors.
- Pupils know about the different types of bullying. They say that bullying rarely happens, but that teachers tackle any problems effectively.
- Pupils feel safe in school. They understand the potential dangers of the internet, and learn about fire and road safety.
- The displays around the school celebrate pupils' backgrounds and provide pupils with an understanding of people and communities beyond their immediate experiences. For example, pupils learn about Chinese New Year, Eid and Diwali.
- Most parents who responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, as well as the majority of staff agreed that pupils feel safe in school.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils behave well in lessons, as well as at playtimes. They move safely around the school, are courteous and display good manners when speaking to adults.
- Pupils get on well with each other and treat each other with respect.
- Pupils attend school regularly. This is because pupils enjoy learning in school. The school works closely with the few families whose children do not attend regularly, and attendance for these pupils is now improving.

- Most of the parents and staff who completed Ofsted's online surveys agreed that pupils behave well in school.

### **Outcomes for pupils**

**Good**

- At the end of key stage 2 in 2017, the proportion of pupils working at or above the expected standard was higher than the national average in reading, writing and mathematics combined.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are achieving well in relation to their starting points. This is because of the focused support they are receiving.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language are well supported and are doing as well as their peers.
- Rates of progress for the majority of disadvantaged pupils are steadily improving in English and mathematics. Evidence from pupils' work and from the school's assessment information indicates that many of these pupils are making better progress this year compared to last year. This is due to teaching being more effective.
- The school's current assessment information, supported by inspection evidence, shows that most pupils currently in the school are making good or improving progress in English and mathematics. However, the most able pupils are not making as much progress as they are capable of from their starting points. Teachers do not provide them with work that challenges them frequently enough to increase the rapidity of their learning.
- Pupils' progress in subjects other than English and mathematics is variable as leaders are not monitoring pupils' progress consistently in these subjects.

### **Early years provision**

**Good**

- The early years provision is good. Children enjoy a wide range of experiences across the curriculum.
- Adults help children settle quickly into school. As a result, children develop good routines and are happy and confident in their environment.
- Staff provide high-quality care to children. Children feel safe and behave well. Children are developing positive behaviours for learning. They concentrate well and show resilience when carrying out tasks.
- Children get on well with each other, take turns and share resources.
- Partnership work with parents is strong. Parents attend workshops to help them support their child's learning.
- Safeguarding is effective and statutory responsibilities are met.
- Most children enter Reception with skills that are typical for their age. By the time they leave Reception, a high proportion of children are working at good levels of development. As a result, they are well prepared for Year 1.

- Adults know the children well and plan work that is appropriate for most children. However, some of the activities planned for the most able children do not provide enough challenge to stretch and deepen their skills.

## School details

Unique reference number	102655
Local authority	Merton
Inspection number	10037685

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	604
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Julie Hyam
Headteacher	Lisa Francis
Telephone number	0208 542 6936
Website	<a href="http://www.hillcross.merton.sch.uk">www.hillcross.merton.sch.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:info@hillcross.merton.sch.uk">info@hillcross.merton.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	2–3 April 2014

## Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils attending this school are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above the national average. The large majority of these pupils speak English fluently.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have support for SEN and/or disabilities is above average.
- The school meets the current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations set by the government for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.



## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils' learning in all classes. Leaders accompanied inspectors on some of the visits to lessons.
- Pupils' work was reviewed during lessons and a more detailed scrutiny was made of pupils' books with senior leaders. Pupils' work in a wide range of subjects was scrutinised. Pupils' work on display was also considered.
- Pupils read to inspectors, and inspectors spoke with pupils throughout the inspection to gain their views.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and during break and lunchtimes was observed by inspectors.
- Meetings and discussions were held with the senior leadership team, staff, parents and pupils.
- Inspectors met with governors and a local authority officer.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of evidence, including the school's documentation on pupils' attainment and progress, safeguarding, behaviour, attendance, minutes of governing body meetings, the school's self-evaluation, plans for improvement and external reviews of the school.
- Inspectors considered the 111 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, as well as speaking to parents directly. The responses to 39 staff and 31 pupil questionnaires were also considered.

## Inspection team

Jenell Chetty, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Ann Pratt	Ofsted Inspector
Jon Hills	Ofsted Inspector
Lando Du Plooy	Ofsted Inspector

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