

Hope Community School

167 Rectory Lane, Sidcup, DA14 5BU

Inspection dates 17–18 June 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	Good 2
Leadership and management	Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Outstanding	1
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 principal, ably supported by governors and the community, has created a cohesive and positive learning culture.
- Pupils make good progress and catch up quickly with expectations for their age. Pupils' progress in reading is especially strong.
- Reading is a golden thread of excellence through the school. Pupils develop a passion for reading. Books are prominent in all areas of the school and they are used well throughout the curriculum.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are exemplary. Pupils are enthusiastic learners and this makes a significant contribution to their good academic progress. Pupils' conduct around school is impeccable.
- Pupils feel safe. They have a very good understanding of how to stay safe beyond school and on the internet.
- Teaching assistants make a strong contribution to pupils' learning. They are well deployed and challenge pupils' thinking through skilful questioning.
- The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is at the heart of the school's work. This makes a strong contribution to the pupils' excellent attitudes to learning and good progress.
- Home visits and a 10-week reading project ensure children are ready to start Reception. For many children this plants a seed for a love of reading and books. Children settle quickly and make good progress in all areas of their learning.
- Governors visit the school frequently. They are highly ambitious for all pupils to achieve their full potential. They provide rigorous challenge to leaders, teachers and the school community.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching does not always stretch the mathematical skills of the most-able pupils.
- Pupils have infrequent opportunities to carry out simple science experiments.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed a range of learning activities across both classes, some of which were undertaken jointly with the headteacher. The inspector also visited a lesson in the local meadow and an assembly.
- The inspector observed pupils' conduct during morning break, lunchtime and around the school. The inspector had lunch with pupils in the dinner hall, observing their behaviour, manners and social interaction.
- The inspector held informal discussions with groups of pupils. The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, early years leader, inclusion leaders, governors and the Chair of the New Generation Schools Trust.
- The inspector met 22 parents to discuss their views of the school. Telephone calls were also made to two parents who wished to give feedback to the inspector about the school.
- Forty responses to Parent View, the online survey for parents, as well as 13 responses to the staff questionnaire, were considered.
- The inspector listened to a group of pupils read and discussed their views about books, behaviour, safety and their learning.
- The inspector reviewed work in pupils' books and the school's information showing pupils' progress.
- The inspection scrutinised a range of documentation provided by the school, including action plans, the school's own checks on its performance and the quality of teaching. Records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding were also considered. The inspector reviewed the health and safety risk assessments, including for the on-going building work at the school.
- During the inspection the school received an announced moderation visit for the Year 1 phonic screening check. This was conducted by Bexley local authority. The inspector observed the feedback from the local authority officer to the headteacher.

Inspection team

David Storrie, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This free school opened in September 2013. At the time of the inspection the building was being extended and was due for completion by September 2015. It is the founding member of the New Generation Schools Trust.
- It is much smaller than the average-sized primary school. The school started with one full-time class of 30 Reception Year children. Currently, there is one full-time Reception class and one class in Year 1. At the time of inspection there were no pupils in Years 2 to 6. The school will continue to expand each year until there are 30 pupils per class from Reception to Year 6.
- The school curriculum is based on the National Curriculum. The trust has adapted this by including a focus on entrepreneurialism, community and business. Each unit of work considers if pupils can learn from the local community or businesses; for example, recent work has been undertaken with a garden centre, sports complex and car dealership. The school teaches French and Mandarin. Pupils begin to learn simple computer coding from Year 1.
- There are no national assessment results by which to measure the school's performance against the government's current floor standards (the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics).
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and who speak English as an additional language is above average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are supported by pupil premium funding is below average.
- The school only had children in Reception during 2013/14. Therefore, there is no national assessment information to compare the achievement of disadvantaged pupils with other pupils nationally.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further raise pupils' attainment and progress in mathematics, particularly for the most-able pupils, by:
 - ensuring that teachers provide regular opportunities for pupils to apply their calculation skills through unfamiliar problems and situations
 - expecting pupils to consider how and why they have tackled problems using particular calculation strategies.
- Provide regular opportunities for pupils to question scientifically and conduct simple tests.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The principal and governors have successfully developed a caring culture and a resolute vision for continuous improvement. They set high expectations in promoting pupils' good achievement and in ensuring that teaching improves over time.
- School leaders and governors have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They have created a purposeful atmosphere, with a strong emphasis on teamwork. Middle leaders contribute to planning the school's developing curriculum, and are increasingly taking responsibility for checking the effectiveness of the school's work. This academic year, the early years leader and inclusion managers have successfully led and monitored the effectiveness of the school's work in these areas.
- The school's curriculum promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very effectively. This is a strength of the school and it is fortified by the school's values of 'adventure, hospitality, openness and creativity'. Each part of the day is used to enhance learning. For example, lunchtime is structured to allow pupils to serve each other lunch with staff and volunteers. Pupils speak of lunchtime being a time to 'talk over food'. The impact of this work is seen in pupils' respect for themselves and others and strongly contributes to their impeccable behaviour.
- Pupils, regardless of their ability or background, have their needs met well through the learning opportunities which school leaders and teachers organise. Their spiritual, moral, cultural and social development is excellent because they have many opportunities for learning about differences and similarities of faiths and lifestyles. Their creative work in art and language learning in Mandarin and French are appreciated by parents. Pupils are very well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Leaders and teachers ensure that pupils develop a keen sense of their responsibilities towards each other, and to people from other cultures or walks of life. This demonstrates the school's commitment to promoting tolerance and equality. A Year 1 pupil told the inspector, 'We all get on, we are a family. We are all different, but it would be wrong not to get on ... it doesn't matter if we are Christian, Hindu or another religion, we are all friends.'
- The school's relationship with parents is strong. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and appreciate that staff know their children well as individuals. Parent View showed almost unanimous satisfaction with the school's work. One parent summed up the views of many who spoke to the inspector that the school 'nurtures the children's growth academically and as individuals in a caring family atmosphere'. Parents feel involved in the life of the school because of the daily opportunities to work alongside their children at the beginning of the school day.
- Performance management focuses on improving the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. Teachers are rewarded for good performance and this is linked to a range of evidence from the school's checks on quality over the academic year. Training for staff focuses on the learning of pupils; this has successfully ensured improvements in teaching since the school opened. Further training is provided so that staff can keep pupils safe, for example, recent training has covered issues such as female genital mutilation and anti-radicalisation.
- Pupil premium funding is used effectively to raise the achievement of disadvantaged pupils. It is successful in its focus on closing gaps between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and their peers.
- The school received its first primary school sport funding in April 2015. It has begun to provide a wide range of sporting activities, such as hockey and basketball through specialist coaching. This is providing professional development for staff in physical education, but it is too soon to see the impact of this work.
- Safeguarding meets statutory requirements. All staff and governors are well trained in keeping children safe. The school has policies and procedures that effectively promote the safety of children in school and beyond.
- The school has commissioned external consultants to provide support and challenge since it opened. This has been well used by leaders to ensure their judgements are accurate and has helped the school sharpen plans for improvement.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are very committed to the school and its pupils. They are highly visible in school and speak to pupils, parents and staff about their experience of school life. They use knowledge gained from these regular visits, detailed reports from the headteacher and regular surveys of parents and pupils to challenge and support leaders. They have a secure understanding of the quality of teaching in the school. They have a clear knowledge of the school's information about how pupils are progressing academically. They make sure that the performance of teachers, including that of the principal, is carefully checked and that rewards are linked to performance management. Governors challenge

leaders to ensure that teaching is improving and that funding for interventions, such as the pupil premium, are improving pupils' learning. Governors make sure that safeguarding requirements are met.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils' attitudes to learning are exemplary. Pupils are enthusiastic learners, listening attentively and offering ideas enthusiastically. They are keen to immerse themselves in learning and take pride in their written work. This impeccable behaviour makes a significant contribution to their good academic progress. Pupils' conduct around school is well mannered and very polite.
- Outstanding behaviour is maintained by pupils when moving around the school, at social times and when learning beyond the classroom, for example at the local meadows. Children in the early years and pupils in Year 1 play well together in the playground. The school successfully fosters good relationships between pupils; as a result, there is a harmonious and friendly atmosphere in and around the school. The overwhelming majority of parents who responded to the online survey were confident that the school makes sure the pupils are well behaved.
- Pupils are really proud of their new school. Pupils look after their school grounds, lunch hall, and equipment. They keep the building and grounds litter free. Their passion for polite social interaction is very evident when they sit together and serve one another lunch.
- The school has clear rewards and sanctions which are understood by pupils and they recognise these are consistently implemented. Excellent support for pupils who find behaviour difficult on entry to the school helps them quickly achieve the school's high expectations. Behaviour for this very small number of pupils therefore improves significantly over time.
- Pupils' attendance has been rising since the school opened. Attendance is rigorously monitored. As a result, pupils' attendance has improved from the national average in 2013/14, to being above average. Leaders act quickly to address persistent absence. Pupils who have had persistent absence have markedly improved over this academic year.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding.
- Pupils feel very safe at school. Parents and staff are unanimous in their agreement that pupils are safe. The inspection found that the school's excellent policies and procedures are embedded into the school and promote this security. Leaders are not complacent and have ensured the curriculum promotes pupils' understanding of how to stay safe.
- Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to stay safe in and out of school. They have a clear understanding of internet safety and the hazards being online can pose. Visits from the police and role-playing dramas help pupils to consider real-life scenarios and how they will stay safe, tackling issues such as, 'What would I do if I got lost without an adult?'
- Pupils are well aware of the many forms that bullying can take place and are adamant that bullying in any form does not happen at their school. They understand how to report bullying concerns and say they can rely on staff to quickly intervene when problems arise. The school's records are detailed and showed very few behavioural incidents over time. Pupils say there are minor disagreements, but that these are quickly resolved. Racist or homophobic language or discrimination of any kind are not acceptable or tolerated.
- The school's excellent policies and procedures, particularly for health and safety and child protection, are implemented extremely thoroughly. Pupils are very aware that rules are there for their safety and welfare.

The quality of teaching is good

- Pupils' work shows that they make good progress as a result of good teaching over time. Lessons are well planned to match their learning needs, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. The school's records and the inspector's observations show that pupils are well taught in the early years provision.
- Teaching assistants make a strong contribution to pupils' learning. They are deployed well in lessons and in learning beyond the classroom. They ask stretching questions which help pupils develop their learning and written work. For example, a teaching assistant asked a pupil to explain why he had identified a blackbird when looking at animals in the local meadow. He replied, 'Used the key and found the black bird. It has an orange beak. It looks the right size too.'

- Feedback to pupils, both orally and in writing, is good. Teachers regularly give pupils advice on how to improve work. Pupils use this feedback to improve the quality of their work.
- Teachers use their good subject knowledge to give clear explanations, for example to correct any misunderstandings pupils may have.
- The specialist teaching of French and Mandarin is helping pupils make progress in modern foreign languages. For example, pupils are increasingly confident in their knowledge of numbers, colours and food.
- Teachers and teaching assistants ensure pupils learn letters and the sounds they make quickly. This is helping Year 1 pupils make rapid progress in reading and reinforce their enjoyment of books. Information from checks on pupils' progress has been used well to make sure that pupils are given reading activities which they find challenging. Pupils are enthusiastic about books because the school has promoted a love of reading exceptionally well.
- Writing is developed well across the curriculum. Pupils are writing in sentences and encouraged to use their knowledge of spelling to write accurately. Teachers set high expectations for handwriting and the presentation of work. Pupils' work shows marked improvements over the year, as they rise to the high expectations from the staff.
- Regular practice of mathematical skills deepens pupils' understanding of addition, subtraction, division and multiplication. Pupils make good use of the physical resources teachers give them to help them in their calculations. However, the work teachers set for the most able pupils in mathematics is not always sufficiently challenging. Their work does not consistently allow them to practise their calculation skills in unfamiliar problems, or consider why they have solved problems using particular methods. As a result, higher ability pupils do not deepen their understanding of mathematics to their full capability.
- Pupils benefit from regular science teaching, they have an excellent understanding of key areas of learning. For example, one pupil explained, 'Electricity can come from the sun or wind. They power generators that make electricity.' However, pupils' ability to work scientifically is less secure as pupils have few opportunities to question scientifically or carry out simple science tests. Leaders accept this is important for pupils to progress and be ready for the Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3 science curriculum.
- Pupils' learning in school is well supported through home learning tasks that help them to develop their interests and practise key skills from across the curriculum. The weekly newsletter also provides parents with ideas to reinforce work from the classroom.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Pupils, including those from ethnic minority groups and those who speak English as an additional language, make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils' progress in reading is excellent. Reading has a high profile across the school and there is active reading support from parents during and beyond the school day.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make the same good progress as other pupils at the school. They experience good support, carefully tailored to their needs. Due to the care, guidance and support given, a minority of individual pupils make rapid strides in their learning, but this is not consistently the case.
- Pupils who receive additional help and support make good progress across the curriculum. Leaders have tracked these interventions carefully and ensured that resources are targeted on specific academic and social needs. As a result, gaps between pupil groups are closing.
- Pupils have achieved well in the school's first phonic (letters and the sounds they make) screening check. The school's evidence of pupils' achievement shows around eight in every ten pupils are likely to achieve the expected standard this year. This has been achieved due to accurate and systematic teaching which has pushed pupils' ability to use phonetic language skills. Pupils can be found enthusiastically reading around the school in quiet areas, for example in a deckchair by the school beach. Pupils make good progress in writing and their handwriting skills are being consistently developed, ensuring their writing is increasingly neat and fluent.
- There is no national assessment information to compare the achievement of disadvantaged pupils with other pupils nationally. The school's achievement information shows that, over time, eligible pupils attain slightly below their peers in Year 1. However, leaders use additional funding effectively to provide targeted support to close gaps.
- The most-able pupils achieve well. They are challenged in their reading and writing activities and this ensures they make good progress. However, they are not always as consistently stretched in

mathematics.

The early years provision

is good

- Most children join the early years provision with skills below those typical for their age, especially in the areas of communication and personal and social skills. However, this academic year a small number of children started school with skills above those typical for their age in many areas of the early years curriculum.
- At the end of the Reception Year in 2014, despite good progress, a lower proportion of children achieved a good level of development than nationally. However, in 2014/15 this has significantly improved, with many more children making sufficient progress to catch up with age-related expectations. This year almost four fifths of the children are on track to achieve a good level of development, which is higher than the current national average. This represents good progress.
- The quality of teaching in the early years is consistently good. Adults organise many activities for children to learn new skills, for example experimenting with natural materials to create Andy Goldsworthy pictures or taking holiday bookings in a travel agency.
- Adults talk to children and ask them questions as they play. Adults keep detailed records of children's knowledge and abilities, and their assessment of children's progress is frequent and accurate.
- Due to high quality teaching of phonics, children have a particular strength in reading. Most children are confident in sounding out unknown words and blending these to read them. As a result, children are well prepared for Key Stage 1.
- Children enjoy learning in the well-planned indoor and outdoor learning areas. Relationships with adults are warm and very supportive. As a result, children's physical and emotional health, safety and well-being are well developed.
- Leadership and management of early years are good. The early years leader has an accurate understanding of the priorities for improvement and how to raise standards further.
- Liaison with nursery providers and parents is a particular strength. Home visits and a 10-week reading project, prior to starting the Reception Year, ensure children settle quickly and make good progress in all areas of their learning. For many children this 'plants a seed' for a love of reading and books.

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	139561
Local authority	Bexley
Inspection number	450054

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	60
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Weston
Headteacher	Lisa Morris
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	020 223 2000
Fax number	
Email address	enquiries@hopecommunityschool.org

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