

# Sherwin Knight Infant School

Cedar Road, Strood, Rochester, ME2 2JB

## Inspection dates

2–3 October 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Teaching is not consistently good enough in every class to ensure all pupils do as well as they can.
- The teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they make) is not always matched closely enough to what pupils need to learn next.
- Progress in writing, although improving, is not rapid enough because many pupils do not enjoy writing and do not apply their knowledge of phonics when they spell words.
- When pupils work in groups, sometimes teachers do not make sure every pupil takes part and is able to learn everything they should.
- Tasks are not always planned or modified during the lesson carefully enough to build effectively on what each pupil already knows.
- Most leaders and managers are new in post and some are not yet fully involved in improving the quality of teaching and learning.

### The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher has taken prompt and decisive action to improve teaching, set about ensuring improvements to behaviour and raise standards.
- The governing body offers challenge and support and is rigorously checking how well the school is doing.
- Pupils are making at least expected progress in reading and mathematics. The more-able pupils are making good progress.
- Teaching is improving due to regular checks on its effectiveness and high-quality coaching and support for teachers.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed parts of 13 lessons, of which six were joint observations with senior leaders.
- In addition, inspectors made short visits to a number of lessons.
- Meetings were held with three members of the governing body, a group of pupils, a representative of the local authority and school staff, including class teachers and senior and middle managers.
- Inspectors took account of the six responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning and carrying out the inspection. They also looked at the results of the school's own recent surveys of parents' and pupils' views. Fifteen responses to the Ofsted staff questionnaire were also taken into account.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents. These included the school's own data on pupils' progress, the school improvement plan, evidence of internal and external monitoring of the school's effectiveness, records relating to behaviour and the school's procedures for safeguarding pupils.

## Inspection team

Carole Skinner, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Victor Chaffey	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is broadly average in size compared with primary schools nationally and its pupils are mostly of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is lower than the national average.
- Approximately 8% of pupils are supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs, which is broadly average. About 10% of pupils are supported through school action, which is also in line with the national average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium, which is additional money provided by the government to schools, is approximately 19%. This is similar to the national average.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in a Nursery class (morning and afternoon sessions) and a Reception unit where there is integrated provision for up to 75 children.
- The school is federated with the co-located junior school and has a shared governing body. It is subject to proposals to amalgamate with the junior school in September 2013.
- The interim headteacher joined the school in May 2012 pending the appointment of a headteacher for the two schools in April 2013.
- The interim deputy headteacher joined the school in September 2012.
- There have been a number of other staff changes since April 2012, some due to long-term absences of permanent staff.

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

- Improve teaching so that it is consistently good or better across the school by:
  - planning lessons that build effectively on pupils' previous learning and meet individual needs, particularly in phonics
  - making lesson introductions brisk, engaging and stimulating so that pupils quickly become engrossed in learning
  - making effective use of a variety of resources, including technology, to enliven lessons and support learning
  - assessing pupils' progress more rigorously during lessons and reshaping tasks where appropriate to accelerate learning
  - ensuring all pupils can participate and make good progress in group tasks
  - embedding the new marking and feedback procedures so that pupils know exactly what they need to do to improve.
- Accelerate pupils' progress in writing by:
  - ensuring all pupils quickly develop a good understanding of phonics and the ability to apply this knowledge in their writing
  - making lessons interesting and exciting in order to develop pupils' enjoyment in writing
  - further developing the links between thinking, talking and writing
  - making sure pupils have all the tools and prompts they need to support the writing process.
- Improve leadership and management by increasing the effective involvement of senior and middle leaders who are new to their roles in evaluating teaching and learning and modelling good practice.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Despite marked improvements, there are still inconsistencies between classes in the rates of progress pupils make. Also, pupils generally make faster progress in reading and mathematics than they do in writing.
- Attainment is rising and most pupils are making at least expected progress during their time at the school. The school is closing the gap between girls' and boys' attainment, but boys still do less well in writing.
- Pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium are catching up on other pupils due to carefully targeted support. Pupils who speak English as an additional language achieve at least in line with their peers.
- Progress is variable but improving for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. Like their peers, they make slower progress in writing than in other areas of learning and this is often linked to weak communication and listening skills.
- Many children enter the Nursery with skills and knowledge below those expected for their age. They settle quickly in school, grow in confidence and independence and enjoy learning. While they make good progress in some areas of learning in Nursery and Reception, the development of phonics and writing skills is less well developed.
- More-able pupils make good progress in reading and use their knowledge of phonics increasingly well in their writing. Some middle and lower attaining pupils struggle to blend sounds together in order to read and spell words correctly and their knowledge of 'tricky' words, such as 'said', 'what' and 'woman', is patchy.
- Many pupils lack enthusiasm for writing and find it 'too hard'. Often this is because lesson tasks fail to capture their imagination and they cannot think of ideas. Some have good ideas but do not have the necessary skills to write them down.
- In mathematics, pupils confidently use appropriate calculation strategies to solve word problems. They show appropriate levels of skill in measuring length, weight, capacity and time, and can identify correctly the properties of two- and three-dimensional shapes.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Although improving, the quality of teaching remains inconsistent and is not yet promoting good progress for all groups of pupils across all classes and in all areas of learning.
- Teachers generally have high expectations of what they want pupils to achieve in lessons, but sometimes expect too much of them. For example, Year 1 pupils were asked to discuss in groups and act out a story with a beginning, a middle and an end. Those working under adult supervision were guided and helped to carry out the task whilst others, who were working independently, had not fully understood what was expected, so progress was limited.
- On the whole, lessons move at a brisk pace, although occasionally teachers talk for too long, which limits the time available for more active learning. Most teachers and support assistants ask pertinent questions that extend pupils' thinking and demand more than one word answers.
- In a few lessons, the introduction fails to captivate pupils and they become fidgety and lose concentration. Few lessons were seen where teachers made imaginative use of technology to stimulate interest. By contrast, where teachers make learning fun, pupils become totally engrossed. For example, outstanding teaching in a Year 2 mathematics lesson motivated and engaged pupils from the start, and they were challenged very successfully to solve a variety of problems.
- In some lessons, pupils are not given enough support to help them develop their writing more rapidly, for example through discussion and by reference to prompts and examples of useful vocabulary on the tables or displayed on walls. On the other hand, there is a strong focus on

editing and improving first attempts which is helping pupils to make good improvements to the content and style of their writing.

- In Nursery and Reception, teachers and support staff work well as a team to plan activities in response to children's interests. Planning generally takes account of children's stages of development and there is an appropriate balance of activities led by teachers and those chosen by the children.
- Across the school, the teaching of phonics does not build systematically on children's different starting points to ensure rapid progress for all.
- The provision for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is improving. Teaching assistants provide good support for these pupils in many lessons, although this is not consistent across the school or in all parts of a lesson.
- Day-to-day assessments of pupils' progress are improving but are not yet rigorous enough to ensure all lessons build effectively on previous learning. Occasionally, teachers miss opportunities to reshape lessons when learning slows.
- Teachers have begun to implement a new 'pink and green' marking scheme which pupils say shows them what they need to do to improve. This is at an early stage of development.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils**

### **requires improvement**

- When pupils have to sit and listen to the teacher talking for too long, some lose interest and start to fidget, talk to each other or just look around the room. When lessons get off to a good start with activities that stimulate pupils' interest and enthusiasm, behaviour is good and pupils quickly become engrossed.
- At playtimes and in the dining hall, pupils mostly behave well. They cooperate well, help those in difficulty and most are polite to adults.
- Pupils say they feel safe and that there is an adult they can turn to if they are worried or hurt. They have no concerns about bullying, although a few mentioned name calling. Parents agree that the school keeps their children safe from harm.
- New, rigorous procedures are in place to manage unacceptable behaviour but these are not being implemented consistently in all classes. For example, pupils sometimes keep calling out in response to questions, despite repeated reminders. Occasionally, the management of the poor behaviour of one or two pupils interferes with the flow of learning for the rest.
- Attendance is broadly in line with the national average with few instances of persistent absenteeism and no recent exclusions.

### **The leadership and management**

### **requires improvement**

- The newly-formed leadership team, whilst it has numerous strengths, has not had time to raise the quality of all teaching to the level of the best in order to ensure consistently good progress for all groups of pupils.
- Nevertheless, the headteacher has significantly strengthened the school's capacity to improve through the appointment of new leaders and by sharing his high aspirations for the school with all staff. As a result, staff share the headteacher's vision for the school and morale is high.
- New leaders have yet to contribute fully to improving teaching and learning through lesson observations and working alongside teachers to share good practice, but joint observations with inspectors show them to be rigorous and accurate in their evaluations. The headteacher's regular and incisive observations of lessons, coupled with carefully targeted support for specific teachers, have led to marked improvements in quality.
- Formal performance management procedures have increased in rigour and are closely linked to the priorities in the school improvement plan, pupils' targets and staff salary progression. Regular pupil progress meetings ensure senior leaders and teachers work together to identify quickly any pupils who are making less than expected progress and decide on appropriate

action.

- The school promotes equality of opportunity through, for example, employing a home/school worker who works closely with families and provides additional support for pupils. Pupil premium funding is used appropriately, for example in providing additional support in lessons. The impact of this can be seen in the pupils' improved rates of progress.
- The local authority has provided valuable support for the headteacher and governing body in driving improvement at a rapid pace, including coaching for teachers. An early years specialist has worked with the school to improve the quality of provision for the youngest children.
- Inspired by the Olympics, the whole-school focus on high aspirations is captured in the words of its mission statement, Be the Best You Can Be, and the concept of Team Sherwin. This is helping to enhance pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The curriculum meets statutory requirements and is enriched by extra-curricular activities such as football, choir, eco-club and drama club. Over-arching themes such as 'Batteries Not Required!' encompass all aspects of learning and engage pupils' interest. The curriculum is less successful at raising pupils' awareness of the multicultural nature of society.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- the federated governing body provides vigorous challenge to school leaders. Governors have a clear picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are rigorous in checking progress against the priorities in the school improvement plan
- governors have good first-hand knowledge of the school and have increased their strategic involvement in determining its future.

## 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>	118457
<b>Local authority</b>	Medway
<b>Inspection number</b>	401754

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	245
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mike Griffin
<b>Headteacher</b>	Lloyd Murphy
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	9–10 June 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01634 338260
<b>Fax number</b>	01634 338261
<b>Email address</b>	murpl131@medway.org.uk



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