

Durrington Middle School

Salvington Road, Worthing, West Sussex, BN13 2JD

Inspection dates 10–11 October 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
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

- The expectation and challenge in lessons are not consistently high enough, especially for the most-able pupils.
- The quality of verbal feedback and marking is variable and is not always specific enough for pupils to understand how to improve their work further.
- New initiatives are not consistently embedded and applied by all teachers.
- Monitoring activities are not always focused well enough on pupils' standards and progress.
- Few staff, other than senior leaders, have responsibilities for subjects or aspects of the school's work.

The school has the following strengths

- The federation has had a noticeable impact in the middle school especially on teaching and learning.
- Leaders have set a clear and decisive direction for improvement which is having a positive effect on raising pupils' achievements and the quality of teaching.
- Governance is strong. Governors hold leaders to account robustly for the school's work.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and want to be in school. Behaviour is consistently good in lessons and around the school.
- Support for the pupils whose circumstances make them most vulnerable is good in both the specialist support centre and in lessons.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 17 lessons and made three other short visits to lessons and classrooms.
- Meetings were held with a group of pupils, senior and middle leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body, a local authority officer, teachers and support staff.
- Inspectors took account of 34 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and staff responses.
- Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a number of documents, including the school's own data on pupils' progress and attainment, planning and monitoring documents, including performance management procedures and outcomes, and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Judith Rundle, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Colin Lower

Additional Inspectorinspector

Carol Vant

Additional Inspectorinspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Durrington is a larger than average-sized middle school with an increased number of pupils on roll this year. It has a specialist support centre for nine pupils with social and communication difficulties.
- The middle school is in a hard federation with the first school. The two schools have the same headteacher and governing body. This has potential benefits for both schools, especially more flexibility with staffing, everyone using the same procedures, joint training activities and continuity in learning for pupils between the two schools.
- The proportion of pupils who need extra help or with a statement of special educational needs is well above average, including pupils with: a specific or moderate learning difficulty; speech, language and communication needs; behaviour, emotional and social difficulties or a physical disability. The number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is in line with the average. The number of pupils eligible for additional funding because they are the most vulnerable, known as the pupil premium, is above average.
- Most pupils have a White British background. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of good and outstanding teaching so pupils achieve even more by:
 - raising expectations and the consistency of challenge in lessons especially for the most-able pupils
 - ensuring that all teachers make consistent use and reference to pupils' targets during lessons so pupils understand how well they are learning and how to improve further
 - ensuring all teachers identify the specific next steps pupils need to make to improve their own learning during feedback and marking.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - ensuring new initiatives are consistently applied by all teachers
 - ensuring that monitoring activities focus rigorously on pupils' standards and progress
 - enabling other staff to take leadership responsibilities across the school.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' previous standards have been significantly below average and they did not make enough progress during their time at the school. As a result of well-focused developments last year the rate of progress improved rapidly and pupils reached standards that were in line with average in English and mathematics for the first time in recent years. Achievement requires further improvement because although progress and standards have risen quickly in all age groups they are still making up for previous underachievement so are not consistently good.
- The work seen in lessons and in pupils' books and the school's own information indicate that the trend in improvement is continuing and pupils' work is becoming better. More pupils are on track to meet higher targets than previously. However, the most-able pupils are not always challenged well enough and some are capable of even more. Most parents who completed the online questionnaire spoken to were happy with the progress their child makes.
- Most pupils who need extra help or who have a statement of special educational needs make the same progress as others in the school and achieve as well as the same groups nationally. Pupils in Year 7 who are supported made faster progress than others in that year overall although in Year 6 these pupils made less progress in mathematics. Pupils eligible for free school meals and the most vulnerable reach standards that are in line with others in the school and nationally.
- Pupils who attend the specialist support centre benefit from a caring and nurturing environment and are prepared well for working in classrooms. They make better progress in their social and emotional skills than in their subject work.
- Pupils' work is improving quickly because of the broad range of new initiatives that have been introduced. For example, most pupils are starting to use the THRASS tables to help them recognise the different sounds in words and to help them spell new words. The accelerated reading scheme and changes to the library have had a very positive impact so there is now more excitement, interest and progress in reading. There is better consistency in calculation methods and problem solving in mathematics. However, initiatives are not embedded firmly in all lessons and lower ability pupils sometimes find these methods difficult and they start to hinder their learning.
- Pupils have increasing opportunities to use their literacy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills in other subjects. For example, pupils enjoyed writing formal letters to Queen Elizabeth the first during their history topic and most included persuasive facts and opinions on why she should give up smoking and chewing tobacco. Pupils are confident in using laptops, computers and electronic notebooks to support their learning. However, not as many opportunities are planned for pupils to use their numeracy skills in other subjects.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is improving although still requires improvement as not enough teaching is consistently good or outstanding. The federation has enabled effective changes in teaching and the number of teaching assistants. This has resulted in smaller teaching groups for older pupils and setting in English and mathematics so work can be better matched to pupils' different abilities.
- Leaders have put in place an extensive training programme for teachers and teaching assistants, particularly in how to make best use of new initiatives and to raise expectations. This has included team teaching and observation of best practice and results in better pupil achievement. However, inconsistencies remain in how well all teachers are using new methods.
- In the best lessons teachers ask challenging questions and extend pupils' initial ideas well. They target individuals so everyone is included in discussions and tasks challenge pupils of all abilities. Adults model good reading, writing, communication and mathematical skills and have high expectations of pupils' capabilities. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils'

learning, especially during small-group work and when they support the most vulnerable.

- All teachers use a broad range of resources, including ICT, to engage and motivate pupils and to spark their interest in learning. All lessons include WALT (what we are learning today) and success criteria although not all teachers continuously check pupils' progress against these during lessons. Occasionally, success criteria are used as a check list of tasks rather than as challenging targets.
- Where teaching is not yet good, expectations are not always high enough and although different activities are planned effectively, they are not always transferred successfully into lessons. This means that work does not consistently challenge all pupils, especially the most able.
- The use of pupil targets and teacher assessment is improving although remains inconsistent across the school. Although pupils know their targets for improvement, particularly in English, not all teachers use and refer to them. As a result not all pupils understand fully how well they are doing or the relevance of targets in helping them to improve their work further.
- Pupils have increasing opportunities to evaluate their own and others' work and enjoy using the traffic light system to indicate their understanding of work. During verbal feedback and marking teachers do not refer enough to each pupil's individual targets, how they have improved against them or identify the specific next steps pupils need to make to improve.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. They display positive attitudes in lessons and want to learn new things. This is reflected in improving attendance and punctuality rates. Most parents and carers agree that behaviour is good.
- Pupils know right from wrong and are polite and courteous with each other, staff and visitors. They work together cooperatively and high levels of respect are shown between pupils and adults. Pupils respond positively to the raffle ticket rewards for behaviour and work efforts and table points encourage effective teamwork.
- Pupils and staff say that behaviour is always typically good although pupils recognise for themselves that behaviour can deteriorate in some classes when there is not a consistently 'firm but fair' approach. This indicates that not all pupils are ready to take responsibility for their own and others' behaviour which still has to be tightly controlled by adults in some lessons.
- Pupils in the specialist support centre are well prepared for social situations in and around the school so are comfortable when included in class and whole-school activities. At times they are over-protected and some are capable of being involved even more, especially during 'talk partner' and class discussions.
- In lessons and in the playground pupils take good care of each other, share equipment and apparatus well and know how to keep themselves and others safe. They use equipment and apparatus with safety, for example, in the playground when using the adventurous climbing apparatus, in science when using Bunsen burners and in art with cutting equipment.
- Pupils show good understanding of the different types of bullying and say that very little ever occurs in school. A few parents and carers expressed concerns regarding how effectively the school deals with bullying. Inspectors found that activities planned in lessons and assemblies help pupils identify, prevent and report bullying. School procedures to tackle and follow up any incidents of bullying are secure and pupils are confident that any issues are dealt with effectively when they tell adults. School leaders recognise that more could be done to keep parents and carers informed of anti-bullying activities in school.
- Pupils enjoy taking responsibilities as peer buddies and wear their 'purple jackets' with pride. The role as young interpreters is a unique feature of the school. Their role ensures that any new pupils who are at the early stages of learning English have specific buddies, with the same language, which helps them settle quickly into their new school.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The revised leadership team for both schools is strengthening and improving provision. The headteacher, together with other senior leaders, has set a clear and decisive direction of improvement. They have put much in place to ensure agreed systems across both schools although these are not embedded fully so their impact is limited. The federation has had a noticeable impact in the middle school where the major focus for improvement was necessary to speed up pupils' progress and raise standards. Leaders have shown their capacity for improvement through successful changes brought about within a short space of time.
 - Staff in the middle school are positive about the changes, recognise their contributions are valued and say everyone is 'now singing from the same hymn sheet'.
 - Leaders, including governors, know the strengths and priorities for improvement thoroughly because of a secure programme of monitoring and evaluation activities. However, not all monitoring focuses consistently or rigorously enough on pupils' standards and progress to ensure improvements take place consistently.
 - Management of teachers' performance and training has brought about improvements in teaching and pupils' achievement although leaders recognise there is still some way to go to ensure initiatives are embedded and all staff are using them consistently. Staff, other than senior leaders, are now better placed to take leadership responsibilities across the school.
 - Developments in the curriculum ensure all pupils access learning equally. Topics are interesting and engaging with more opportunities to use literacy and communication skills in other subjects. Enrichment activities are varied and contribute well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, in Year 7, pupils study the global community and in religious education lessons pupils learn about others' beliefs and cultures through interesting and informative visitors.
 - There are good links with parents and carers through newsletters, workshops and regular parent and carer meetings to ensure they are well informed.
 - **Governance of the school** is a strength.
 - Governors are unafraid to tackle difficult issues, and decisions are focused firmly and effectively on securing the best for pupils and their achievements.
 - Governors are actively involved in monitoring the school's work, including the performance of all staff and hold leaders to account robustly for the school's work.
 - They ensure safeguarding procedures are secure so pupils and staff say they feel safe.
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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	125952
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	402788

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

Type of school	Middle deemed primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	8–12
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	375
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ged Harbinson
Headteacher	Alison Cornell
Date of previous school inspection	20–21 January 2010
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