

Itchingfield Primary School

Fulfords Hill, Itchingfield, Horsham, RH13 0NT

Inspection dates

21–22 November 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
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.

- School leaders have high expectations and they have created a positive climate for learning in which pupils achieve well both personally and academically.
- School leaders and governors have successfully tackled previous weaknesses in teaching through robust systems for performance management. This has led to improvements to pupils' achievement.
- Pupils achieve well across the school. They make good progress in reading and mathematics and reach standards that are above average by the end of Year 6.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make similar progress to their classmates as a result of the good support they receive.
- Teaching is typically lively with well-planned activities that enable pupils to make good progress.
- Pupils feel safe at school and they behave well because staff have consistent approaches to managing their behaviour. Pupils enjoy working and playing together, reflecting the school's effective provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage because staff provide a stimulating and nurturing environment.
- School leaders and governors have an accurate understanding of the strengths of the school and what needs to be improved further. Teamwork is strong and school policies are consistently applied across both parts of the school. Leaders have successfully addressed issues from the previous inspection, demonstrating that they have the capacity to improve further.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils do not make as much progress in writing as they do in reading and mathematics.
- Pupils' basic skills in handwriting, spelling and punctuation are not as good as they should be.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed eight lessons or parts of lessons taught by six teachers. Some of these were joint observations with the headteacher. She listened to pupils read and she scrutinised work in their books.
- Discussions were held with senior leaders, members of the governing body, a representative from the local authority and groups of pupils.
- The inspector observed the school's work and scrutinised a number of documents, including the school's records on current pupils' progress, behaviour and attendance. Documents relating to planning, monitoring and safeguarding were also considered.
- The inspector took account of the 22 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and the school's own survey of parents' and carers' views.

Inspection team

Joy Considine, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than most primary schools and pupils are taught in mixed-age classes. The school is situated on two separate sites; the infants are taught at the Barns Green site and the junior pupils are taught at the Itchingfield site.
- The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage with very few who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs who are supported through school action is average, as is the proportion who are supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium funding, additional money from the government for pupils who are eligible for free school meals or in local authority care, is below average.
- The school's most recent results cannot be compared to the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum standards for pupils' attainment and progress, because there were not enough pupils in Year 6 in 2012 to make such comparisons meaningful.
- None of the pupils on the school's roll are taught in other provision (other schools or units).

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' standards in writing so that they are consistently good across the school by ensuring that all teachers:
 - place a greater emphasis on accurate spelling, punctuation and neat handwriting in all lessons so that pupils have more time to concentrate on the content of their writing as they get older
 - provide more guidance to pupils about how they can improve the quality of their writing by giving more opportunities for them to correct and edit their work
 - make sharper use of assessment information to plan lessons that build on and develop pupils' ability to write fluently and competently.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils achieve well over time. They make good progress in reading and mathematics, so that, by the end of Year 6, standards are above average. They make slower progress in writing and reach standards that are broadly average by the end of Year 6.
- Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They enter school with skills broadly as expected for their age and they make good progress across all areas of learning. They settle well into classroom routines and feel happy and safe. Children get on well together and show care and consideration towards each other. Many already read and write simple sentences and count accurately to 10 and beyond.
- Pupils have well developed skills in information and communication technology (ICT). They select appropriate programmes to record their work, demonstrating effective keyboard and control skills, and they use computers to carry out independent research into topics such as Egyptian gods.
- Pupils enjoy reading. They use a range of skills, including sounding out letters to read unfamiliar words. They enjoy talking about their favourite authors and give reasons for their preferences. In many lessons, teachers select books and poems to develop pupils' understanding of other subjects. In one lesson, pupils read and analysed poems relating to the Egyptians, which is the current class topic.
- Skills in writing are weaker than those in reading and mathematics. This is because pupils have not developed the basic skills of handwriting, spelling and punctuation securely enough by the end of Year 2. Scrutiny of pupils' work shows that pupils lack confidence when writing and that they do not use a variety of vocabulary or sentence structures to engage the interest of the reader. This hinders the progress they make when writing.
- Pupils say they enjoy mathematics and this is reflected in the quality of their work. Older pupils confidently apply number skills to solving complex problems, including those that involve fractions and decimals. Similarly, in one lesson, Year 1 pupils thoroughly enjoyed finding out how many times they could hop for a given period of time to develop their understanding of time.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make similar rates of progress to other pupils, demonstrating the school's effective focus on promoting equality of opportunity. New systems to identify their needs have been put into place so that they receive targeted support from teachers and teaching assistants.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is typically lively, enthusiastic and captures the interest of pupils. Pupils enjoy their lessons and say that they learn a lot. Since the previous inspection, leaders have used performance management effectively to improve teachers' skills so that teaching is consistently good across the school. Parents, carers and pupils agree that teaching is good.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, staff are skilled at observing children and using this information to plan activities to build on what children can do. There is a good balance of activities that children can select for themselves and those that are directed by adults. Staff provide children with time to work and play independently and this helps to develop their resilience and confidence to tackle new experiences.
- Most teachers make good use of assessment information to plan lessons that enable pupils to build on what they already know and can do and this helps them to make good progress. Activities are usually well matched to pupils' learning needs in the mixed-age classes, although the pace occasionally slows for the more-able older pupils. There is a good balance of practical activity and recorded work. In a science lesson in Years 3/4, pupils predicted what sorts of materials are attracted to magnets and then tested their ideas before recording their findings.

- Teachers have good subject knowledge and they use this to question pupils to deepen their understanding. The quality of discussion between teachers and pupils is good and this gives pupils the opportunity to share their ideas and to learn from one another. Teachers also provide opportunities for pupils to learn through independent research and this helps to foster positive attitudes to learning.
- Although most teachers have high expectations for pupils, there are times when some do not challenge pupils enough when pupils complete written tasks. This is because they do not make sharp enough use of assessment information to build on and develop pupils' skills. Similarly, when marking pupils' work, they do not provide enough guidance about how pupils can improve their writing and this hampers the progress made.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are taught well. In one lesson a teaching assistant helped a pupil to carefully sound out letters to help him to read. Pupil premium funding has been used to increase teaching assistant time to support those pupils receiving the funding who have language and literacy difficulties and this has helped them to make good progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils enjoy school and they behave well in lessons and around the school. They are polite and friendly to visitors and treat each other and adults with respect. They say that pupils are friendly and that school is 'like a big family'. They attend regularly and are always on time for lessons.
- They are aware of different forms of bullying such as name calling and internet bullying, but are adamant that it never occurs. They are confident that, should a minor disagreement occur, adults are always on hand to help.
- Pupils have good understanding of the need to keep themselves safe. They understand about risks posed by traffic and the dangers associated with substance and tobacco abuse. Regular visitors to school, such as the police, remind pupils of the need to be aware of their personal safety.
- There is a calm orderly atmosphere in school. Very occasionally, when the pace in lessons slows, a few pupils become fidgety and start to chat among themselves. When asked what could be most improved, they said that they would like to be together in one building so that older pupils could help younger ones.
- Parents and carers who responded to the survey agreed that behaviour is good and that the school keeps their children safe. Records kept by the school show very few reported incidents of bullying or racist behaviour. There have been no exclusions in recent years.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has developed a strong team who shares the vision and values that underpin the quality of education provided by the school. They are ambitious and have introduced significant improvements since the previous inspection. New systems to record and track pupils' progress enable leaders to identify those at risk of falling behind. Consequently, provision to meet the needs of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs has improved.
- Systems to manage the performance of all staff are securely in place and this has led to improvement to the quality of teaching which is now good. The headteacher and senior leaders regularly check the work of teachers and provide support and training to help them improve their skills.
- Leaders have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and what needs to be improved. Their plans for development are focused on continuing to improve teaching and to raise standards further. New initiatives to improve the quality of writing have been introduced, but it is too soon for these to have had an impact across all parts of the school. The school receives

light touch support from the local authority and is responsive to the advice and support provided.

- The curriculum motivates and inspires pupils and promotes their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Pupils are reflective and they are sensitive to the needs and feelings of others, which prepares them well for life in a diverse society. The curriculum is well planned, with increased opportunities for pupils to use their reading skills when learning other subjects, although the use of writing in other subjects is less well developed.
- Procedures for safeguarding pupils are effective. All adults are carefully checked and arrangements for protecting pupils are rigorous. Staff ensure that all pupils have equal opportunities and consequently most pupils, including those who speak English as an additional language, achieve well. Discrimination on any grounds is not tolerated.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors visit regularly and they know the school well. They are well informed about pupils' achievements so they effectively check the work of the school and hold leaders to account. Members know the strengths of teaching and are well aware of how school leaders have improved teaching since the last inspection. They know the impact of performance management, which enables them to make informed decisions regarding pay awards for staff. They manage the school budget well and ensure that the pupil premium funds are spent wisely to enable eligible pupils to achieve as well as their classmates.

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	125838
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	402358

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	95
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Hammond
Headteacher	Simon Simmons
Date of previous school inspection	4 November 2009
Telephone number	01403 790204
Fax number	01403791457
Email address	office@itchingfield.w-sussex.sch.uk

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