

White Meadows Primary School

Whitelea Road, Littlehampton, West Sussex, BN17 7JL

Inspection dates

5–6 December 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	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.

- Senior leaders, including governors, have successfully guided the school's development since its amalgamation.
- Pupils achieve well, particularly in their speaking, listening, reading and basic number work. They enjoy using their writing skills in topic work.
- Additional support and activities provide good support that helps disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, and pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium, so that these pupils also achieve well.
- Teaching is typically good through the school. Teachers keep a close watch on how well pupils make progress in most subjects.
- There is a harmonious and positive atmosphere for learning and pupils typically behave well and feel safe.
- The Nursery and Reception classes give children a happy and very secure foundation for their future learning.
- Leaders and managers check teaching quality systematically and ensure any weakness is quickly followed up with training and support.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Some of the teaching does not enable pupils to develop full confidence in spelling and the use of a wide vocabulary.
- Teachers sometimes spend too long explaining tasks and do not always make clear to pupils why they are learning certain ideas and skills.
- Not enough engaging opportunities are provided for pupils to find things out through investigative work or real-life contexts in mathematical activities.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in all 18 classes. They visited 25 lessons or part lessons. Five were observed jointly with senior leaders, and many activities related to the teaching of pupils with special educational needs were observed with a senior leader.
- The inspection team held meetings with the Chair of the Governing Body and vice-chair, staff and a representative from the local authority. They looked at documents, including the school plans for improvement, safeguarding information, recent local authority reviews, assessment records, attendance information and the school's checks and information on pupils' progress.
- Inspectors met with a representative group of pupils, heard pupils read and observed lunchtimes, playtimes and two assemblies. They looked at the past work of pupils in Years 1 to 6.
- Account was taken of the 19 responses to the parents' online questionnaire (Parent View) and 38 questionnaires completed by members of staff.

Inspection team

Kevin Hodge, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Jill Thewlis	Additional inspector
Jameel Hassan	Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school opened in September 2011 following the closure of the former infant and junior schools which shared the same site. Considerable work took place to refurbish and extend existing buildings, along with improvements to the outside environment.
- As a result of the amalgamation, the school is much bigger than average and serves pupils mainly from the local area.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage consists of one Nursery class and three Reception classes.
- The majority of pupils are White British, but around 10% of pupils are from minority ethnic heritages, which is a below average proportion. A smaller than average proportion are at an early stage of learning to speak English.
- The number of pupils eligible for additional funding, called the pupil premium, is much higher than is normally found.
- The proportions of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, which includes those pupils supported by school action, school action plus and those with statements of special educational needs, are well above average.
- The school has an early morning breakfast club managed by the governing body.
- The school meets the government's floor standards which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- None of the pupils are taught in alternative provision (other schools or units).

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve achievement in English and mathematics in Years 1 to 6 by:
 - increasing pupils' ability to spell accurately using a wider range of words to improve the quality of their writing
 - giving pupils more opportunities to apply their number skills in practical activities and ensuring that most activities have a real-life connection.
- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching by:
 - ensuring pupils are clear about why they are learning certain ideas and skills
 - ensuring that lessons proceed at a quick pace, and making the introductions and explanations in lessons shorter so that pupils are really stretched in their thinking and speed of work.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Children enter the school with skills and abilities at well below the levels typical for their age. They make good progress in a happy, productive atmosphere, so they enter Year 1 at levels close to those expected. During the inspection, children enjoyed making Christmas cards in Reception and writing out simple messages, and nursery children enjoyed learning numbers from their visiting 'maths fairy'.
- Pupils throughout the school have quickly settled to their new arrangements and are keen to do their best. As a result, in Years 1 to 6, pupils also achieve well. In the first set of National Curriculum tests taken in the summer, Year 2 pupils reached average levels, but, despite making up good ground since starting at the school, Year 6 results were below average. Pupils' current rates of progress show good improvement over those achieved last year across all year groups.
- Pupils write with increasing confidence in response to good initiatives to develop creative writing skills. Pupils like writing accounts, such as work connected to Tudors in Year 5. However, in their day-to-day writing, not all pupils are fully confident to spell accurately or to use a wide vocabulary when story or account writing.
- In mathematics, regular teaching of basic number work is enhanced by new initiatives to ensure that pupils are confident and able to work out addition, subtraction and multiplication problems. These secure skills however, are not always used regularly in more open-ended investigative work or in real-life contexts. Pupils in Year 6 however, enjoyed a special 'Soaptastic' activity day when they designed, costed and produced various small bars of soap to sell at the school's Christmas fare.
- Pupils are keen readers and can recall a good range of authors. They are particularly proud of their attractive and well-resourced library. The majority of Year 1 pupils reached above average levels in their national screening phonics check, reflecting their secure knowledge of letters, sounds and combinations to aid their reading.
- Some good activities, pitched accurately at pupils' level of understanding, help disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, along with those at the early stages of learning English, to achieve as well as their classmates. Activities in class and in adjacent spaces, skilfully led by additional adults, enable them to learn confidently and feel secure to ask for help when needed. This fosters good relations and helps ensure that all pupils are given an equal chance to learn and make progress.
- Pupils for whom the school received pupil premium funding make good progress because they respond well to the more individual help in the smaller Year 6 classes and in the many small-group and one-to-one activities that target specialised support to address their needs.

The quality of teaching

is good

- The quality of teaching is typically good through the school, although there are some variations in quality and not all is at the very best level.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children enjoy learning from a good range of activities which help promote their basic number and language skills, as well as their creative abilities. In an outstanding lesson in Nursery, children were given a wide variety of activities to follow and learn. The class teacher constantly challenged their thinking which developed a 'can do' attitude in the children. As a result, they enjoy school, feel settled and make good progress so they are well equipped to move into Year 1.
- Teachers through the school make good use of the new technologies to illustrate learning points or to list activities to follow. On occasions however, pupils are not given a clear idea about what they are expected to learn from a particular task or its relevance to them.
- Most mathematics teaching has elements of practical work such as measuring parts of the body or working out the cost of a Christmas party in some classes. However, pupils' work over time

indicates that these types of investigating activities are not typically taught.

- Teaching encourages pupils' moral and cultural understanding well. For example, pupils in Year 5 studied the Jewish faith alongside their work on Christmas traditions.
- Teachers keep a close eye on pupils' progress so spot any pupils who may need help or who may fall behind. This helps them plan for differing ability groups.
- In a few lessons, teachers' explanations are too long which slows pupils' work rate. Not all teaching demands the highest efforts from pupils.
- Reading is taught well. Daily lessons, which systematically teach letter sounds and combinations, along with frequent opportunities to read individually and in groups, help pupils read confidently.
- Pupils' skills in spelling and vocabulary develop less well, because teaching does not always motivate pupils to write at length, challenge pupils to use more exciting words or point out simple errors for some. Pupils know the purpose of targets to help them improve, but some are overly detailed so they are not always clear about what they are aiming to learn next.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are catered for well. Planning takes into account their specific needs skilfully. Teaching assistants are very adept at providing the right balance of support and challenge so that pupils make good gains in their learning.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Staff have succeeded in fostering pupils' good levels of behaviour, while bringing together pupils from differing age groups and backgrounds into one new school.
- Children in Nursery and Reception learn and play together very well which gives them a good start to school life.
- Pupils speak enthusiastically about their new school. They say they are safe and enjoy all the various activities on offer. They say that should bullying occur, in any form, the school is very quick to deal with it.
- Pupils on the school council enjoy their role in making suggestions for improvements in their new school, and having tea with the headteacher to discuss issues was a highlight for them.
- Other pupils spoke enthusiastically about 'Freedom Friday', where pupils have more choice in activities to follow, and said, 'It really rocks!' Other pupils echoed the sentiments about the range of activities they enjoy such as learning about *Macbeth*, enjoying the outdoor swimming pool and the extra-curricular clubs which help broaden their experiences.
- In a small number of activities, particularly where pupils' imagination is not captured as quickly or the pace of the lesson drops, there are occasional lapses in attention.
- Pupils move around the school quietly when entering assemblies and classrooms, and pupils say they enjoy lunchtimes as they can have good discussions with fellow pupils while eating lunch.

The leadership and management are good

- Senior leaders, including members of the governing body, have successfully amalgamated two schools and developed high levels of teamwork among staff.
 - School leaders have identified accurate priorities and have introduced good new initiatives in writing and mathematics that are already paying dividends in most areas of pupils' learning.
 - Regular checks on pupils' progress pinpoint quickly any pupils in danger of falling behind. Class teachers use the information to target support.
 - Additional resources funded from the pupil premium grant effectively support those pupils for whom it is provided and enable them to make similar progress to their fellow pupils. Providing extra staffing to create a third Year 6 class this year for example, enables staff to keep a closer eye on a smaller number of pupils and give more individual support to aid their learning.
 - Senior leaders have raised the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement through a programme
-

of teacher coaching. The school makes clear links between teachers' performance and the distribution of responsibilities and salary levels.

- The local authority provides effective support, particularly in helping spot where improvements or changes of approach are needed to aid the school's early development.
- The subjects taught help pupils develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness well. These aspects thread through lessons, assemblies, visits and informal discussions. Links with schools abroad also help to broaden the pupils' experiences of others from differing backgrounds. The breakfast club provides a good start to the day for those pupils who participate.
- Links with parents and carers are good and those who responded to the Ofsted questionnaire unanimously said they would recommend the school to others.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors support the school well by visiting regularly to gauge progress and emerging developments. Governors attend and benefit from a wide range of courses, for instance, in finance, child protection and first aid, and in understanding how teachers' performance is managed and rewarded. In this respect, governors have a clear understanding of the link between teachers' performance, different levels of salary and how well the school's emerging performance compares to others. They know how additional pupil premium funding is distributed, particularly in providing extra levels of staffing to reduce class sizes and to increase the number of small activities for groups and individuals. Governors have a good insight into current teaching quality through visits and discussions, which include staff, pupils and parents and carers. Governors ensure good levels of safeguarding and vetting procedures and ensure that all pupils have equal opportunities to achieve and that discrimination in any form is not tolerated.

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	135809
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	400261

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	460
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Anne Briggs
Headteacher	Luisa Gould
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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