

West Minster Primary School

St George's Avenue, Sheerness, Kent ME12 1ET

Inspection dates 12–13 December 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

- Attainment, while improving, is below the national average at the end of Key Stage 2.
- The progress pupils make as they move through the school is uneven because the quality of teaching varies too much.
- Pupils do not always progress quickly enough in lessons because they are not always clear about how to be successful in their learning.
- Tasks for pupils do not provide opportunities for them to apply their writing skills in all subjects.
- Leaders and governors' strategies have not improved teaching and pupils' achievement quickly enough.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders are now taking actions to improve the approaches used by teachers to their planning and teaching.
- Children in the Nursery and Reception make a good start because sessions are planned well so that children learn and develop successfully.
- The school uses additional funds to provide good support for pupils who need extra help.
- Pupils behave well and feel safe. They have positive attitudes toward their learning, share their ideas with each other and work well together in lessons.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 24 lessons across all year groups, of which three were joint lesson observations with senior leaders. They scrutinised work in pupils' books, especially in Years 5 and 6.
- Inspectors met with pupils and talked with them about their written work. They also listened to pupils reading.
- Meetings were held with the Chair of the Governing Body, senior leaders and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at documentation relating to safeguarding, the performance management of staff, the tracking and assessment of pupils' attainment and progress, attendance data and records of governors' meetings.
- Inspectors looked at the school's website and observed pupils during their break and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors took account of seven responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) as well as talking to parents and carers informally during the inspection. Questionnaires from staff were also considered, along with the school's own survey of parents.

Inspection team

Howard Jones, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Barbara Firth	Additional Inspector
Barbara Saltmarsh	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a larger than average primary school.
- The school is a lead school for physical impairment.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is above average as is the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils receiving support from pupil premium funding, including those eligible for free school meals, is above average.
- The school is federated with a local primary school and has a shared governing body.
- The school provides a breakfast club for pupils and this formed part of the inspection.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school meets the government's floor targets which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that it is consistently good or better across the school by:
 - making clear to pupils exactly what they need to do to be successful in their learning
 - ensuring teachers check pupils' progress frequently during lessons
 - planning activities which enable pupils, whatever their need, to join in whole-class and group activities
 - planning for the timely use of pupil resources so that the pace of learning is not slowed.
- Accelerate pupils' progress in writing by:
 - having clear expectations that pupils will apply the skills they have been learning in English to their writing in other subjects
 - ensure the quality of pupils' writing is presented to a high standard.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - putting in place better systems to share best teaching practice
 - ensuring all leaders check to make sure new initiatives have an impact on improving teachers' planning for lessons.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Standards at the end of Year 6 are improving. Attainment rose sharply in 2012, especially in mathematics, where less-able pupils were particularly successful. However, levels reached in tests remain below national averages.
- Children enter the Nursery with skills well below those typical for their age. They reach a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year. This is because a wide range of learning opportunities and consistent checking of children's progress are linked to good support by teachers and other adults.
- The progress pupils' make in different year groups from this point is more variable. Pupils who took the national phonics screening test in Year 1 achieved in line with the national average. However, because of weaker teaching, pupils in Year 2 did not make good enough progress in reading, writing and mathematics last year.
- Progress improved for Year 6 pupils in 2012. This was markedly so for both girls and lessable pupils in mathematics. Checks made by the school on how well pupils are doing currently in Year 6 show they are making at least the progress they should, although progress is weaker in writing.
- Pupils supported by extra funds have made good progress in mathematics. These pupils do as well as others because the school has provided effective support to make sure they have an equal chance to succeed.
- The progress of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs and those who need extra help has improved. They make at least the progress they should.
- Pupils talk confidently about their learning. They like reading and use a range of skills to help them understand what a book is about. Younger readers link letters to sounds to help them read new words. However, progress in writing is slow because attention to the quality of presentation of writing is poor.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching does not promote consistently good achievement. This is because teachers do not make clear to pupils what they need to do to be successful in their learning. Consequently, while pupils can often talk about their activities, they are less confident in thinking through how to improve their work, and this limits their progress.
- Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and frequently. They make detailed comments and pupils often have the opportunity to respond to these with written replies. However, during lessons, teachers do not check pupils' progress frequently enough to see how well they understand or to add more challenge if some pupils find the work easy.
- Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to work together and talk about their work. For example, in a science lesson, pupils moved between their groups to learn from each other so they could develop their ideas. However, in a few lessons, adults do not plan to enable pupils, whatever their need, to be fully included. Consequently, their progress is not consistently good.
- In good lessons, learning moves on at a fast pace. For example, in a mathematics lesson on probability, the teacher modelled the thinking process and challenged pupils to use key words as they moved on to their own tasks. However, in many lessons, the timely introduction of appropriate pupil resources is weak so the pace of learning slows down.
- Teaching in mathematics is improving. Pupils say they enjoy these lessons because learning is applied to 'real life' situations. However, not all teachers have clear expectations that pupils will apply the skills they have been learning in English to their writing in other subjects. Nor do they ensure the quality of writing is presented to a high standard.
- In Nursery and Reception, children enjoy a range of activities. This is because teachers and other adults plan opportunities in response to children's interests to develop their use of

language. Children work well together in groups and listen to each other. Independence is encouraged and their progress is tracked over time.

- The progress of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs or who need extra help has improved. This is because planning for these pupils has developed across the school and support is now suited to meet their needs. However, expectations by adults to include these pupils fully in whole-class activities are not consistently high enough and this slows their progress.
- Progress of pupils for who the school receives extra funding is good, and sometimes markedly better. The school has worked effectively to provide an equal chance for these pupils to succeed.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils are respectful and enthusiastically welcome visitors to their school. They communicate in a mature manner and are interested in enquiring what visitors think about their school. They are keen to talk about their subjects, especially the variety of topics in mathematics lessons.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to their learning. They work well together and are happy to talk about their learning and share their ideas with each other. In lessons where the pace is slow, especially when resources to support learning are not readily to hand, pupils sometimes lose focus and learning slows.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how the school promotes good behaviour. They say they feel safe in school. Pupils show an understanding of what constitutes bullying and say it is rare and, when it does occur, adults deal with it effectively. They say behaviour in lessons is good.
- Attendance is broadly in line with the national average. This is improving across all groups of pupils because of the work the school is doing with parents and carers.
- Pupils arrive on time to lessons and move quickly to different group activities across the school. Movement around the school at key times during the day is calm and open spaces outside are well supervised.
- The school's breakfast clubs are well organised. Pupils are provided with a range of healthy food and activities. Pupils say they enjoy this start to their day.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The quality of teaching remains inconsistent. Consequently, pupils' progress is slow in some lessons. Leaders have brought about some improvements but these new initiatives have yet to become everyday practice for all teachers and the quality of teaching varies across subjects and within year groups.
- Teachers say the training they receive is appropriate. Leaders, with good guidance from the local authority, support teachers with advice and coaching. These programmes are beginning to have an impact, as seen in the progress made by some groups of pupils last year, but the sharing of best practice is not routine.
- Procedures are in place to check the performance of teachers. This has not been consistently pursued. Both assistant headteachers have a strong understanding of their role and, more recently, are effectively checking the quality of teaching to focus clearly on key areas for improvement to accelerate pupil progress.
- There is a strategic view of the provision for pupils who need extra help. Consequently, there is an appropriate range of support across the school which is beginning to have an impact. This extra help has yet to be fully checked to ensure that pupils with particular needs are able to fully benefit in all class activities.
- The school does not tolerate discrimination and is committed to providing equal opportunities for all pupils.

- The subjects taught are planned with pupils' interests in mind. This is especially so in the Nursery and Reception and in mathematics. There is some good use of laptops to support literacy and the use of e-readers in reading. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects are covered across subjects, but how the school helps pupils to think about people from different backgrounds is weaker.
 - The arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet statutory requirements.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - The federated governing body has a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development and knows how it compares to schools nationally. Governors undertake regular training and know in what ways pupils' achievement needs to improve. They check the executive headteacher's performance against targets and receive reports on the quality of classroom teaching. Their understanding in these areas is strong and they have taken appropriate steps to challenge where leadership and teaching is weak. They are aware of initiatives in place to improve the quality of teaching and know what is being done on salary progression. However, they have not challenged leaders on how far these have brought consistently good teaching across the school. A key strength is the understanding governors have of the impact additional funds, such as pupil premium, are having on those pupils who need extra help. Succession planning to secure effective leadership across the federation is also a strong feature.
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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	118438
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	400375

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	441
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jim Duncan
Executive Headteacher	Alan Bayford
Date of previous school inspection	22–23 June 2010
Telephone number	01795 662178
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