

# Benfield Primary School

255 Old Shoreham Road, Portslade, Brighton, BN41 1XS

**Inspection dates** 27–28 November 2012

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Inadequate</b>	<b>4</b>
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching		Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Inadequate	4

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires special measures.

- Leaders and managers, including governors, have for too long been unable to remedy the underachievement of pupils in Key Stage 2.
- Pupils leave the school with standards of attainment in English and mathematics which are too low. They have poor calculation skills and their writing has too many errors.
- Current attainment in Year 6 is low because the progress that pupils made in Years 3, 4 and 5 was too slow and they have not been able to catch up in Year 6.
- There are weaknesses in the quality of teaching at Key Stage 2. In Years 3 and 5, work is not well matched to meet the needs of pupils with different levels of ability, particularly the most able.
- Until very recently, the checks made by school leaders on the quality of teaching were not done regularly or rigorously enough.
- Leaders do not use information about pupils' progress well enough to set targets or to measure the impact of the school's actions. This is particularly the case for pupils who have special educational needs, those eligible for the pupil premium and pupils who are falling behind.

### The school has the following strengths

- Pupils make good progress in Reception and Years 1, 2 and 6 from their low starting points. This is because teaching in these year groups is consistently good.
- Pupils' behaviour is good overall. It is outstanding in Reception and in Years 1 and 2. Pupils respect each other's beliefs and cultures and have a good understanding of right and wrong.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 21 lessons, of which four were joint observations with senior leaders. In addition, inspectors made a number of shorter visits to lessons and watched an assembly. They looked at pupils' books with senior leaders and observed other aspects of the school's work.
- Meetings were held with the Chair of the Governing Body and another governor and school staff. Some pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 took the inspectors around the school and spoke about their learning and well-being. The inspectors spoke to pupils about their reading and listened to them read. A meeting was held with a representative of the local authority. An inspector spoke by telephone with the headteacher of another school who is supporting the school's leadership.
- Inspectors took account of the 42 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and spoke to parents and carers at the school gate. Inspectors reviewed 13 questionnaire responses from staff.
- Inspectors looked at a number of documents, including: the school's own data relating to pupils' achievement; the school's self-evaluation summary; the school development plan; planning and monitoring documentation; records about behaviour and attendance; a range of policy documents; and documents relating to safeguarding.

## Inspection team

Martin Marsh, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Fiona Robinson

Additional inspector

Barbara Saltmarsh

Additional inspector

## Full report

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

## Information about this school

- Benfield Primary School is larger than average.
- A third of the pupils are eligible for the pupil premium (additional government funding for specific groups, including those known to be eligible for free school meals); this is above average and the proportion is increasing.
- The proportion of pupils supported by school action is high. The proportion of pupils supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is significantly above the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- When the school was last inspected it was a junior school admitting pupils into Year 3. In September 2010, it started to take five-year-olds into Reception. The school now has pupils from the full primary age range. As a consequence, the school has many more pupils and has recruited a lot of new staff. In September 2011, the school appointed five newly qualified teachers and three more were appointed in September 2012. Four experienced members of staff have left the school in the last two years. The senior leadership team has grown; the headteacher is now supported by two deputy headteachers, one of whom is currently seconded from the local authority.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching in Key Stage 2 by:
  - making sure that lesson planning caters for the needs of all pupils, particularly the most able
  - creating a brisker pace in lessons and giving pupils more time to get on and finish their work
  - giving more effective feedback in marking so that pupils know how to improve their work
  - clearly defining what additional adults will do in all parts of lessons, so that they enable those pupils with whom they work to make more rapid progress.
- Raise attainment in English and mathematics at Key Stage 2 by:
  - developing pupils' confidence and competence in arithmetic so that simple calculations do not slow them down when they practise what they have learned or move on to more difficult work
  - ensuring pupils are regularly taught how to write accurately using correct spelling, grammar and punctuation
  - giving pupils more opportunities to write for sustained periods of time, for a greater variety of purposes and in a wider range of contexts.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
  - developing the role of governors so they use information about pupils' progress and standards to challenge the school and hold leaders and managers to account for underperformance
  - checking more regularly and robustly on the quality of teaching so teachers know what they

- need to do to improve and when they will be expected to have achieved these improvements
  - developing the use of information gained from assessments by all leaders, so that targets set for pupils are aimed at helping them to quickly catch up with their learning
  - regularly checking on pupils' progress, particularly pupils with special educational needs, those eligible for pupil premium funding and those who are falling behind, and taking action where progress is too slow
  - improving the systems for planning for the future so there is a single plan with clear aims and milestones against which progress can be regularly checked.
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## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is inadequate

- Pupils' achievement at Key Stage 2 is inadequate and overall attainment is too low by the end of Year 6. Children enter Reception with skills below what is typical for their age. Pupils start Year 3 with standards that are broadly average. However, since the last inspection attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 in English and mathematics has been below average. The gap between what pupils in Year 6 are attaining and the national figures has widened. The gap is greater in mathematics than in English.
- Pupils make poor progress in English and mathematics in Key Stage 2. One third of the pupils from Year 6 who left the school in 2012 did not make the expected progress in mathematics and a quarter did not make expected progress in English. Pupils make better progress in reading than in writing and mathematics because adults regularly support weaker readers. Pupils who are capable of doing well in mathematics and reading make even slower progress than other pupils. This is because they are not taught the skills they need to achieve higher levels.
- In Year 6, pupils make good progress but attain below-average standards because there is too much for them to do to catch up due to poor progress in Years 3, 4 and 5. Although progress since September 2012 is stronger overall, there are classes in Years 3 and 5 where progress remains inadequate.
- The school uses a variety of methods to help pupils with special educational needs at Key Stage 2, but these are not routinely checked to see if they are raising attainment quickly enough. Pupils are often wrongly assessed as making good progress when they are, in fact, falling further behind. Consequently, the progress of these pupils is poor. Pupils eligible for the pupil premium do not all receive effective additional support and so they make inadequate progress.
- Children in Reception make good progress because their needs are accurately assessed and well planned for. They are given plenty of opportunities to write and to learn their letters and the sounds they make (phonics). Adults in this part of the school use every opportunity to consolidate and extend the children's learning.
- Progress is good in Key Stage 1. Although no pupils have gone through the whole of Key Stage 1 as yet, standards of attainment in Year 2 are in line with what is expected and standards in Year 1 are above expectations. A seamless transition between Reception and Year 1 enables the good reading skills that pupils develop in Reception to be built on successfully in Key Stage 1.

### The quality of teaching is inadequate

- Teaching has not enabled pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5 to make enough progress. This has been due to poor planning which did not meet the needs of pupils with different abilities, a lack of challenge for the more-able pupils and the slow pace of lessons.
- In Key Stage 2 pupils do not have enough opportunities to practise and develop their mathematical skills. Consequently, they lack confidence when asked to do harder work or solve problems. Those with weaker calculation skills are not routinely given practical resources to help them and they are too quickly taught to use written methods of calculation which they do not understand. More-able pupils are often asked to practise calculations they can already do.
- In some lessons, teachers talk for too long and pupils do not have enough time to work on their own. Teachers do not give pupils clear guidelines as to the amount of work that is expected.
- Older pupils do not have enough opportunities to practise writing accurately using correct grammar and punctuation. They are not taught techniques to help them with their spelling. Teachers do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to write at length or for different purposes.
- In some Key Stage 2 classes, there are often long periods of time when additional adults contribute very little. In contrast, in Reception and Key Stage 1, the time of additional adults is well planned and used effectively to support learning.

- Pupils' work is marked, but there are weaknesses in Year 3 and 5 with insufficient guidance provided to pupils about how to improve. In Year 6, marking is thorough and pupils value this and routinely respond to their teacher's comments.
- Even when teaching is less than good, relationships between teachers and pupils are at least good and sometimes outstanding. Pupils contribute well in lessons and willingly do everything asked of them.
- Provision in Reception is good. Space is extremely well used and routines are very well established. Every opportunity is taken to develop children's learning such as when they were painting letters on a very large sign and the adult reinforced their understanding of phonics.
- Consistently good teaching in Years 1 and 2 enables pupils to make good progress, particularly their reading and writing. For example, pupils in Year 1 learn about 'bossy' (imperative) verbs by constructing and acting out scenes in which they use the words. As a result, they make good progress in understanding this aspect of grammar. Good use is made of resources to reinforce their understanding of calculation and to build on their good counting skills.

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

- Pupils say they enjoy coming to school, that they feel safe and behaviour is good. Although pupils acknowledge that a few 'have some difficulties with their behaviour'.
- The behaviour policy is continually under review; recent changes have resulted in a system for managing pupils' behaviour that is based on rewards rather than consequences that is well understood by pupils and fully implemented by adults.
- Pupils understand how they are expected to behave and respond accordingly. When working, they concentrate and work well even when teaching does not meet their needs.
- The methods teachers and leaders use to manage the very few incidences of challenging behaviour are very effective.
- In the playground, pupils play well together and there is plenty for them to do. They are well supervised and older pupils ensure that younger ones are looked after if they are unhappy or lonely.
- Pupils understand what bullying is and say that it rarely occurs and that when it has, it has been dealt with quickly.
- Parents and carers had very few concerns about behaviour in the school. A very small minority of parents and carers expressed a concern that incidents of bad behaviour were not dealt with quickly enough in the past. However, inspectors found that actions taken by the school were appropriate and timely.
- Attendance is improving and is above average. Pupils arrive on time for school.

### **The leadership and management** are inadequate

- Since the last inspection, the school's leaders and governors have been too slow to put in place measures to improve teaching so that pupils make rapid progress and the gap in attainment at Key Stage 2 closes.
- Information on rates of progress has not been used well enough to assess the impact of the school's actions. In addition, checks on the quality of teaching at Key Stage 2 have previously been weak and this has resulted in the school having an inaccurate picture of its performance. Consequently, plans for the future are weak. There is no single coherent improvement plan which everyone understands or that can be checked regularly to assess the impact of initiatives.
- The local authority has serious concerns about the school and has therefore provided considerable support. This has contributed to the better quality of teaching and progress of younger children. However, the capacity of senior leaders to bring about improvements has not developed sufficiently and they have been unable to implement measures to improve the

progress of older pupils. The seconded deputy headteacher has considerably strengthened senior leadership, but the full impact has yet to be seen.

- Processes to appraise teachers' performance previously lacked rigour; these are now improving. Frequent checks are starting to have an effect on improving teaching and pupils' progress. However, the full impact on raising standards at Key Stage 2 has yet to show.
- Those new to teaching have received good support and are observed regularly. As a result, their lessons are of good quality. They know how to improve their practice and are contributing significantly to the good teaching and learning in Reception and in Years 1 and 2.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Equality of opportunity is promoted well through the study of different cultures and beliefs. Pupils' differences are celebrated and valued, and this contributes significantly to the respect pupils show each other and to their good behaviour. Pupils learn about music and art, participate in sporting activities and are helped to broaden their understanding of the world.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governance of the school is ineffective. Governors have not been swift enough to challenge the school about underachievement and low standards at Key Stage 2. They have not contributed enough to the creation of plans for the future. They do not know enough about the school or the quality of teaching. Governors have not had sufficient training to enable them to carry out their responsibilities well. They are aware of the changes to the appraisal systems for teachers but not how appraisal should relate to pay progression. Consequently, they have not ensured that there is a close match between teachers' pay and pupils' achievement. They have a general understanding of how the pupil premium funding is being used, but not of the impact it is having on pupils' performance. The governing body gives good support to the school in meeting safeguarding responsibilities, particularly regarding the safety of pupils and the appointment of staff.

## 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>	114412
<b>Local authority</b>	Brighton and Hove
<b>Inspection number</b>	400199

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

<b>Type of school</b>	All-through
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	346
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Peter Martin
<b>Headteacher</b>	Lisa Perrins
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	8–9 February 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01273 294950
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