

Poverest Primary School

Tillingbourne Green, St Mary Cray, Orpington, BR5 2JD

Inspection dates 17–18 January 2013

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		Require improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Teaching is not consistently good. The pace of learning is too variable and activities are not always well matched to pupils' abilities.
- Marking does not make clear to pupils what they need to do to improve and to reach the next level in their work.
- Although recent steps to improve achievement are paying dividends, progress is variable, especially in Years 3 to 6.
- Achievement in mathematics is not as strong as that in English. This is because teachers' subject knowledge is not always secure and pupils are not competent in using their calculation skills.
- Systems to check pupils' progress have not been coordinated systematically. Consequently, underachievement has not always been swiftly identified and addressed.
- Leaders do not consistently hold teachers to account for the progress of different groups of pupils in their class.
- The deployment of teaching assistants does not always make the most of their time and skills.
- Significant turnover in staffing has led to variability in the quality of teaching and the balance of subjects taught.

The school has the following strengths

- Children make good progress from Reception class to Year 2 because teaching is good.
- New leaders, including the interim headteacher, have injected new purpose and vigour to the drive for improvement.
- Parents, carers, staff and pupils hold the school in high regard.
- Pupils receiving additional funding make accelerated progress because resources are used to good effect.
- Pupils' enjoyment of school is evident in their good behaviour and improving attendance.

Information about this inspection

- Eighteen lessons or parts of lessons were observed over the two days. Inspectors undertook three joint lesson observations with the headteacher and deputy headteacher.
- Discussions were held with senior leaders, staff, members of the governing body and different groups of pupils.
- An inspector heard individual pupils read and discussed with them their reading preferences and individual reading record.
- Inspectors sampled pupils' work, scrutinised the school's tracking records of pupils' progress and took account of the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans.
- The lead inspector held a discussion with a member of the local authority's advisory staff.
- An inspector visited the free breakfast club and discussed the provision with pupils and staff.
- The views of parents and carers were sought, nine responses to Parent View were examined and inspectors took account of the school's own survey of the views of 61 parents and carers undertaken in March 2012.
- Twenty-four staff questionnaires were scrutinised.

Inspection team

Gordon Ewing, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Ann Sydney

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller-than-average-sized primary school.
- The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils for whom English is an additional language is below average.
- An above-average proportion of pupils is eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in local authority care, children from service families and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is below average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average. A high proportion have complex learning needs.
- The proportion of pupils joining or leaving the school, other than at expected times, is high.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Some after-school clubs are provided by an external organisation. These are not managed by the governing body and were not part of this inspection.
- A free breakfast club for up to 25 pupils, managed by the governing body, runs every morning.
- The current interim headteacher took up the position in January 2013.
- The school has a designated ASD (Autistic Spectrum Disorder) provision, for up to 24 learners with this learning difficulty. Currently, there are 16 pupils on roll. Some of these pupils join the school classes for specific activities.
- No pupils at the school attend alternative provision.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment and improve rates of progress, especially in mathematics, through making teaching consistently good by making sure that:
 - all teachers understand the key components of good teaching through the sharing of existing good practice and additional training
 - regular checks are made on teachers' marking and feedback to pupils to secure best practise
 - the number and calculations policy is reviewed and is rigorously implemented
 - methods of checking the levels of mathematical skills and abilities of pupils are refined in order to identify gaps in their learning and to target swift intervention
 - pupils are systematically taught how to check the accuracy of their calculations
 - pupils have a wide range of opportunities to apply their calculation skills in different ways across subjects, such as science, and through open-ended investigations.
- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that pupils' progress is tracked thoroughly by:
 - reviewing current systems to check the progress of pupils and providing training to all staff so that they have a common understanding of how to use the available information to inform planning and accelerate progress
 - making sure that teachers use assessment information on a daily basis so that lesson activities challenge all abilities
 - closely monitoring the progress of different groups of pupils so that underachievement is swiftly identified and support is triggered to close the gap
 - using half-termly pupil progress meetings to closely hold teachers to account for the progress of different groups.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because when pupils leave at the end of Year 6 their attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is only average when measured against pupils nationally. Attainment is gradually rising but pupils make less consistent progress in mathematics than in English.
- Children enter the Reception class with skill levels below those expected for their age. Many have limited personal and social skills and in communication and language. Consistently good teaching in the Reception class helps them to quickly make up some of the lost ground so that they move to Year 1 better prepared for the challenges ahead.
- Levels of attainment in Years 1 and 2 have been rising steadily over time. As a result, pupils now reach broadly average levels in reading, writing and mathematics. This represents good achievement and reflects the effective teaching they receive.
- The teaching of reading is good. Through a systematic programme of linking letters and sounds (phonics), pupils develop confidence and most of the current Year 1 pupils are on track to achieve the levels expected of them in the national screening test for phonics. By the end of Year 6, current pupils are making better-than-expected progress in their reading because of effective teaching.
- Attainment at the end of Year 6 has varied considerably since the last inspection, particularly in mathematics. The school knows that there is more to do in improving pupils' ability in using number and calculation skills in a range of contexts.
- Pupils eligible for additional funding make better levels of progress than similar pupils nationally, as measured by APS (Average Point Scores) in the assessments at the end of Year 6. The extra funding is used well for individual tuition, group support and extra staffing. These are key components in the successful drive to accelerate these pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The learning and progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, while good overall, vary across the school. Small group support activities are successful in building their confidence and self-esteem, and some outstanding intervention teaching is boosting their achievement in basic skills. However, support in the classroom is of variable quality because teaching assistants are not always deployed to best effect. Too often, they are not actively engaged for the full lesson and pupils do not receive the help that they need.
- Pupils attending the ASD provision make at least expected progress in developing basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics. Their personal and social development is good and pupils gain significantly from the smaller adult-to-pupil ratio, the flexible curriculum and the close teamwork with other agencies.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching requires improvement because it is not consistently good enough to ensure that all pupils make the progress that they should.
- In most lessons teachers plan activities that are appropriately matched to the different abilities present. However, expectations of what pupils can achieve are not always high enough, especially for the more able. Introductions at the start of lessons do not always make it clear what steps the pupils need to take so that they achieve as well as they can. On occasions, pupils are set tasks that are repeating work that they have already mastered. This is especially the case in mathematics.
- New approaches to teaching, through targeted training and mentoring, are raising expectations and increasing consistency. New subject leaders closely monitor the quality of teaching and are

now tailoring training to specific need. However, teachers' subject knowledge in mathematics requires improvement and approaches to teaching basic skills in working with number and using different calculation methods are not consistent, especially for older pupils. Furthermore, pupils are not routinely taught to check the accuracy of their answers by using other methods of calculation. As a result, silly errors are not spotted and corrected.

- The quality of feedback and marking is variable. Teachers mark work regularly and praise pupils for their effort and success in their learning. However, many pupils do not know at which level they are working and opportunities are often missed to provide pupils with advice on how to advance to the next level. Pupils are not always given the time for them to respond to the teachers' marking so, consequently, the teachers' efforts are sometimes wasted.
- Some teachers use teaching assistants really effectively by making sure that their support is well tuned to the lesson objectives and to pupils' needs. However, when teachers are leading whole-class sessions, too often teaching assistants play no active part in the lesson and a valuable resource is under-used.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Around the school, pupils are well behaved and feel safe. Pupils report that bullying of any kind happens infrequently and adults always respond quickly when they feel worried or unhappy. Pupils are evidently proud of their school and judge that recent changes have improved their education. For example, they report that the new ability groups in English and mathematics in Years 5 and 6 are increasing the level of challenge in their work.
- Pupils' attendance is now in line with the national average. Attendance and punctuality have improved steadily in recent times following more stringent procedures put in place to tackle unauthorised absence and to reward better attendance.
- The successful breakfast club, which is attended on a voluntary basis, has made a significant contribution to improving the attendance of several pupils, as well as helping them to get off to a good start each day.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. Relationships across the school are positive and pupils are courteous and polite to each other and to adults. New pupils to the school report that they are well supported and appreciate the warm welcome, which helps them to settle quickly. One newcomer commented, 'Before I started at school I was worried but I soon made friends. I like it here.'
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe at school and beyond. They have good levels of awareness of different types of bullying and the dangers presented to them in life, such as internet grooming and smoking, and they know who to turn to for help.
- Adults manage behaviour generally well. Most teachers use a good balance of reward and sanction to ensure that pupils understand what is expected of them. However, in lessons where teachers do not plan effectively for the range of abilities present, some pupils lose concentration and their learning suffers.

The leadership and management require improvement

- Leadership requires improvement because the checking of teaching and pupils' progress is not rigorous enough to ensure that all groups of pupils make good progress and achieve well. The interim headteacher has made a positive impression in a very short time. She has quickly grasped the mettle and has energised staff in setting a challenging agenda for the future. As one teacher commented, 'If the start of this term is an indicator of the rest of the year then Poverest can only go onwards and upwards.' There is still much to do but staff morale is high.
- New leaders have put into place a cycle of checks on the work of the school, especially teaching, and have set out a programme of support and training that is beginning to address the legacy of

variable achievement across the school. The journey to improvement is still in its early stages and, though teaching is clearly improving, school leaders have rightly identified that the eradication of key weaknesses, especially in mathematics, is a key priority. Overall, the school is well placed to improve further.

- The school promotes equality of opportunity well so that every one is treated as an individual.
- The school soundly promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Through a programme of personal, social and health education and school assemblies, pupils celebrate each other's achievements alongside their own and gain a good awareness of the cultural diversity within their local community and beyond.
- The local authority rightly has the view that the school is well placed to move further with less intensive support as leaders have a clear vision and agenda for improvement.
- Parents and carers hold the school in high regard and have responded very positively to new initiatives to engage them in the life of the school. For example, the new Parents' Forum, introduced by the interim headteacher, is providing a platform to share concerns as well as in discussing new initiatives and developments.

■ **The governance of the school requires improvement:**

Governors have a clear and accurate view of what the school needs to do to improve further. New governors have brought new skills and perspectives that are building on existing expertise so that the governing body is better placed to hold school leaders to account. The school leadership keeps governors well informed. The governing body has a sound grasp of the performance management of staff and it ensures that salary progression is considered in a fair and equitable manner. They have a clear and accurate view of the impact of the school's work on the academic and personal achievement of the pupils. A strength of the governors' work is their knowledge and monitoring of how additional funding is used to support particular pupils so that they achieve at least as well as their classmates. They are committed to improving their own effectiveness through additional training.

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	101641
Local authority	Bromley
Inspection number	400494

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	209
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Debbie Lee
Interim Headteacher	Joanna Walkden
Date of previous school inspection	16–17 September 2009
Telephone number	01689 816060
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