

Coombe Road Primary School

Coombe Road, Brighton, BN2 4ED

Inspection dates 23–24 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		Require improvement	3
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

- Leaders have not checked teaching and learning robustly enough. Because of this it sometimes takes longer than it should for weaknesses in the quality of teaching or the pace of learning to be noticed and addressed.
- Teachers do not use the information from tests on the progress of pupils consistently well enough in their day-to-day delivery of lessons. As a result they do not always have a sufficiently clear view of children's learning, and therefore do not set activities that are suitably well matched to next learning steps.
- Some pupils make less progress in their learning, especially in mathematics, than pupils of the same age nationally because the quality of teaching has not been constantly good enough to make up for pupils' past underachievement.
- There are a small number of problems with pupils' behaviour in the school, both within and beyond lessons.

The school has the following strengths

- A recent change of approach by school leaders, managers and governors now clearly focuses on pupil progress and the quality of teaching. This is having a direct and positive impact on learning.
- Pupil progress has improved significantly for targeted groups of pupils, especially in reading and writing.
- The school is aware of the pupils that find learning challenging and has put effective systems in place to support them in making the best progress that they possibly can.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 18 lessons, of which two were joint observations with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with a group of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body, with the school's middle and senior leaders and with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 19 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. They also looked at 37 staff questionnaires, taking account of their views which covered all aspects of school life.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of school documentation, including records of the checks made on teaching, the school's plan for improving, records relating to behaviour, attendance and health and safety checks and extracts from the school's checks on pupils' progress. Inspectors looked at pupils' written work and listened to groups of pupils read.

Inspection team

Lindsey Diamond, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Penny Orme

Additional Inspector

Fiona Robinson

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Coombe Road is a larger-than-average community primary school.
- The majority of pupils come from a White British background.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action, school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is higher than in most schools.
- The school has a higher level of mobility than the national average.
- Pupils are taught in single-age classes. There are two classes in each year group.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium (additional funding for children in local authority care, children from service families and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals) is higher than normally found.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- No pupils attend any alternative provision, such as teaching in other schools or units.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- To improve teaching by using checks on pupils' progress effectively to support learning for all groups by:
 - developing targeted questioning to ensure that the teacher has a clear view of who understands or does not understand newly introduced learning during lessons
 - ensuring that teachers use the knowledge gained from these informal assessments to quickly re-shape learning within the same lesson, deviating from planning if necessary
 - introducing a whole-school way of recording the learning of groups or individuals within lessons that can be used by all adults in order to gain a clear view of pupil learning and to plan next steps.
- To develop the strategic role of leaders at all levels by:
 - putting in place performance management of all pupil-contact staff by October 2013, with clear, time-limited and measurable objectives specifically linked to pupil learning
 - ensuring that governors hold school leaders to account, including checking that pupil premium funding is having a positive impact on learning
 - ensuring that middle leaders and 'teachers as leaders of learning' are accountable for pupils' progress
 - checking that staff are consistently applying existing systems for supporting behaviour for learning.
- Ensure that pupils throughout the school, across all groups of learners, make expected or better-than-expected progress in mathematics by:
 - using good practice in teaching to support less confident staff in developing their skills
 - ensuring teachers' marking consistently shows what pupils should do next to improve their learning
 - ensuring the planning of mathematics builds on pupils' past knowledge, while making sure any gaps in their learning are identified and reduced
 - giving pupils more opportunities to use their number and problem-solving skills in other subjects.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- A large number of pupils enter or leave the school throughout all the year groups. As a result, many of the pupils that data is reported for have spent little of their primary years at the school. However, clear evidence was seen to show that pupils who enter the school before Year 2, and then spend the rest of their time at Coombe Road, make progress at least in line with national expectations, and sometimes better. This was often higher than the national average in writing, an area that the school has developed significantly since the time of the previous inspection.
- When children enter the school in Reception class, their skills and understanding are generally below levels expected for their age. They then progress well in their first year in school. Historically, evidence shows that in Years 1 and 2 pupils make slower progress, although recent evidence shows that this is no longer the case. With the exception of the Year 6 cohort of pupil who left the school in 2012, where progress in maths was especially low, pupils continue to progress appropriately. There is robust evidence that even within this group of pupils, those that had been at the school for the longest period generally made expected progress, although many did not attain as well as their peers nationally.
- Checks on current pupils' progress, supported by evidence in pupils' books, show that most of the Years 2 and 6 are progressing well in their reading and writing. This includes those pupils who have joined the school at different times during a school year. Progress is slower for all in mathematics, although it is clearly improving. Information on other year groups shows this is the case across the school.
- Where the school has spotted pupils lagging behind others, activities designed to boost their rate of learning have been put in place. These new systems are checked carefully and leaders can clearly identify which programmes are having the most impact. Regular meetings with teachers have been set up to discuss pupil progress and set up activities to accelerate learning where necessary. These actions are beginning to be successful, although it is too early to show their impact over time.
- Pupils achieve better in reading and writing than in mathematics, although this mismatch is reducing in many year groups. Pupils of all ages are supported to learn different ways to help them to read. Many know the sounds letters make (phonics) to read unfamiliar words and are given the opportunity to read a variety of books. During the course of the inspection, members of the team heard pupils read. All were confident in reading and in discussing their books.
- Attainment and progress of pupils eligible for free school meals, based on their average points scores when measured at the end of Year 6, are broadly in line with those of their peers nationally in English, but below in mathematics.
- Because of a focus on their learning, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs generally make better progress than other pupils in the school. The systems used to successfully support learning for this significant group of learners now need to be applied more widely across other groups.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Lessons observations by inspectors, the school's internal checks, along with looking at pupils' work, show that the quality of teaching requires improvement over time. Sometimes, when teaching is less focused, teachers do not ask the necessary questions of learners that help them to check their understanding. Opportunities are then missed to move learning on at speed. Pupils' individual learning targets are sometimes too broad or do not provide enough challenge so that pupils do not make the progress that they should.
- However, during the course of the inspection, several good lessons were seen. When teaching is good, teachers are clear about what pupils can and cannot do and give them work to build on current knowledge and skills. This supports good progress. For example, in a very calm Year 5

maths lesson, the teacher ensured the pupils were fully engaged and learning by making deliberate mistakes and assessing their learning by seeing how quickly and accurately pupils responded to this. Pupils very much enjoyed this way of working. Likewise, in a Year 6 English lesson, the teacher identified pupils who needed extra support and helped them to review previous learning, while ensuring that the pupils who understood the concept moved on at speed. In both these lessons the teachers used humour to effectively engage learners.

- Teachers generally have a clear understanding of the standards that individual pupils are working at. However, these accurate assessments are not used sufficiently well, either to re-shape tasks in lessons or to plan for next learning steps. As a result, tasks are sometimes set that do not meet individual pupil needs. This is especially true in mathematics.
- The way some teachers mark pupils' work is used very effectively as a tool to move learning on, although this practice is variable throughout the school.
- The school has invested in a high number of classroom support staff who generally play a key role within the classroom and support learning well. They are least effective where teachers have not clearly directed them as to their specific role within a lesson, and therefore they are not able to ensure that they are fully supporting learning.
- Pupils are given the opportunity to use information and communication technology (ICT) effectively within lessons to extend their learning.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

require improvement

- The new ways of managing behaviour rely on early intervention and parental involvement and are beginning to have a significant and positive impact both in the classroom and around the school. The school has recently appointed members of staff to support pupils in managing their own behaviour appropriately and ensuring that they are ready for learning.
- Pupils are generally polite and respectful towards adults and each other, although some incidents of inappropriate behaviour were seen during the inspection. These occurred most frequently when the teaching did not engage learners, or teachers did not consistently apply the school behaviour policy.
- During the course of the inspection some positive teacher actions ensured that even pupils with the most challenging behaviour took part in learning. In several lessons seen, teachers regularly and positively reminded pupils of class and school routines and behaviour expectations, using positive behaviour seen as an example to others. As a result, pupils in these lessons behaved appropriately and made good progress in their learning. This approach needs to be applied more widely to ensure that all pupils are given maximum opportunities for learning.
- The number of fixed-term exclusions has reduced dramatically since the time of the previous inspection. There have not been any permanent exclusions in the last two academic years.
- Pupils report that when they do make wrong choices they are given the opportunity to discuss this with an adult, with one adding, 'Sometimes when we do things wrong we have to be reminded a few times.'
- Face-to-face discussions with parents, as well as information from Parent View, reveal that most parents are happy with the way the school deals with inappropriate behaviour. Parents also report that the school deals appropriately with the few incidents of bullying that occur. This view is generally supported by staff.
- Most pupils reveal a good understanding of different forms of bullying, including cyber-bullying, and report that they could share any worries about possible bullying with an adult in school. As a result, pupils say that they feel safe in school.
- The school has worked hard to raise attendance levels. As a result, these have improved significantly since the time of the last inspection and are now broadly in line with national averages. Pupils are generally punctual to school and to lessons, although this was affected by adverse weather conditions during the inspection.

The leadership and management **require improvement**

- Information from measuring pupils' progress is not used effectively enough in moving learning on. New checks are beginning to have some impact for targeted teaching with small groups of pupils. However, they are not yet being used on a day-to-day basis in all classrooms.
- The well-established senior leadership team has recently become significantly more focused on ensuring that learning is a priority within the school, and this is beginning to have a direct impact on pupil progress.
- A middle leadership team has now been established to ensure that work across all year groups and core subjects is carefully checked. They have a clear understanding of their role in terms of organisation and day-to-day responsibilities. However, their strategic role as leaders of whole-school development, focusing on pupil progress, is not yet fully developed.
- Teacher skills are appraised within school. Performance targets are set and regularly reviewed. However, records show that judgements on teachers' performance are not as closely linked to pupils' progress as they should be, and do not have clear links to the Teachers' Standards. School leaders are aware that a greater emphasis needs to be placed on teacher accountability for pupils' learning.
- The curriculum generally matches pupils' interests. However, because of a lack of focus on using assessment when planning the curriculum, all pupils are not given maximum opportunity for good or better progress. In addition, there are too few opportunities for pupils to use their number and problem-solving skills in other subjects.
- Pupils' spiritual and moral development is supported through collective worship and the religious education programme. Cultural awareness is promoted through charitable work and links with schools across the United Kingdom and abroad. The school has developed positive links with a school in Madagascar. Pupils are socially and emotionally very well prepared for life in a modern democratic Britain and a global society.
- The school has fostered very good relationships with parents and carers. When questioned, either through Parent View or face to face, the overwhelming majority of parents and carers expressed confidence in the leadership of the school.
- The local authority is aware of the school's strengths and areas for development and is being proactive in helping the school to move forward for the benefit of learners.
- All day-to-day health and safety measures are in place and the school ensures that all pupils are fully aware of all aspects of e-safety. Safeguarding procedures are robust.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The school has benefited from a newly appointed Chair of the Governing Body. She has been proactive in ensuring that governors are improving their knowledge of the school's performance data and are increasingly holding the school to account for improving the quality of teaching and enhancing pupil progress. However, this is yet to have significant impact on learning. Governors are fully aware of the pupil premium. They are clear as to how the money has been spent in school, but are less able to account for it in terms of the difference it makes to pupils' progress. Governors are involved in performance management but are not robust enough in ensuring that rises in pay are linked closely to good teaching and management. The school is aware of the need for greater governor training and several sessions have been set up to support this.

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	114365
Local authority	Brighton and Hove
Inspection number	401429

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	320
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jan Hunter
Headteacher	Dennis O'Sullivan
Date of previous school inspection	13–14 October 2009
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