

# Firs Estate Primary School

Raven Street, Derby, DE22 3WA

## Inspection dates

30–31 January 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
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

- Teaching is not good enough to make sure that all groups of pupils achieve well.
- Teachers do not always plan tasks in ways that ensure that pupils learn quickly and more-able pupils work hard. They do not always use questions well enough to help pupils to understand new ideas and explain their thinking.
- Marking is variable and does not ensure that pupils take responsibility for improving their work.
- Pupils do not have consistently good opportunities to develop their early reading and mathematical skills. The outdoor area does not provide children in Nursery and Reception with enough scope to reinforce and extend their learning.
- There is not enough small-group work outside the classroom to provide the intensive support some pupils need to help them catch up.
- Leaders have an accurate grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses but some of the actions needed to drive improvements in teaching and pupils' achievement are not taken rapidly enough or followed through robustly.
- While governance has strengths, some of the records governors keep are not detailed enough to enable them to hold senior leaders sharply to account. They do not receive enough information from senior leaders to enable them to judge whether extra funding spent on eligible pupils is having a good impact on raising their achievement.

### The school has the following strengths

- The way senior leaders have improved the achievement of some pupils since the previous inspection shows that they are able to raise standards.
- Children's achievement in the Early Years Foundation Stage improved last year and this is being maintained.
- Although pupils' behaviour is variable, pupils feel safe and know how to stay safe.
- Leaders make sure that big changes in the school roll do not affect pupils' welfare. Parents are happy with the education their children receive and are rightly confident that they are well looked after.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors inspected teaching in 21 lessons taught by 15 teachers. Two of these lessons were observed with senior leaders.
- Samples of pupils' work in English and mathematics were analysed. An inspector listened to some Year 2 pupils reading.
- Meetings were held with school staff, a group of pupils, the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body and a senior school improvement officer from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 13 questionnaires completed by staff and the six responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). Parents' and pupils' responses to the schools own recent surveys were considered. An inspector spoke to some parents on the school playground.
- Inspectors looked at a range of evidence including: the work in pupils' books; monitoring records; the school's own data on pupils' progress; minutes of governing body meetings; and policies, procedures and records relating to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.

## Inspection team

Derek Aitken, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Jonathan Smart	Additional Inspector
Stephanie James	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Firs Estate is larger than the average-sized primary school. Pupil numbers have almost doubled in the last five years.
- The number of pupils who join or leave the school during the school year is very high. More than 50 pupils have joined the school since the start of the school year in September 2012, while 28 pupils have left during the same period.
- The proportion of pupils of minority ethnic origin is growing rapidly and now accounts for more than 50% of the school roll. A large majority of these pupils come from Eastern Europe. Many new arrivals have little or no experience of education or knowledge of English when they join the school.
- A well above average proportion of pupils is supported by the pupil premium, which provides extra funding for certain groups of pupils; including those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is well above average. The proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in one Nursery and two Reception classes.
- The school does not use alternative provision (lessons that take place regularly away from the school site).
- The school does not meet the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

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

- Raise the quality of teaching and improve its impact on pupils' learning by making sure that:
  - teachers plan tasks in ways that allow pupils to learn quickly and enable more-able pupils to work hard
  - teachers make better use of questioning to check pupils' understanding and to help them explain their thinking in greater depth
  - teachers make better use of marking to give pupils more responsibility for improving their work
  - more small-group lessons are organised outside the classroom so that pupils with complex needs receive more intensive support to improve their skills.
- Improve pupils' achievement by:
  - developing the outdoor area to enable Nursery and Reception children to reinforce and extend their communication, numeracy and social skills
  - providing consistently good opportunities for pupils to use and apply their early reading and mathematical skills across a range of subjects.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management, including governance, by making sure that:

- the actions taken to improve teaching and pupils' achievement are taken rapidly and followed up robustly to check that they are effective
- governors keep more detailed written records to enable them to hold senior leaders more sharply to account
- senior leaders provide governors with full information about their reasons for spending extra funding in the ways that they do so that governors can judge whether this money is making a difference to the achievement of eligible pupils.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Pupils' attainment is low at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 because many pupils who speak English as an additional language have limited skills when they join the school at different points. Very recent arrivals can speak only a few words of English and struggle to form letters correctly. Many of these pupils have not attended school before, are not accustomed to routines and to mixing with others. They take very small steps in their learning.
- However, most pupils learning English as an additional language who join the school during or before the start of Key Stage 1 make the progress they should by the end of Year 6. Catch-up programmes led by experienced staff enable them to reduce but not close the gap with their White British classmates.
- The achievement of White British pupils has improved since the previous inspection. From starting points in the Nursery that are well below those typically seen for their age, nearly all of these pupils make the progress they should and some do well. These pupils' attainment in Year 6 in English and mathematics meets the government's current floor standards. Nevertheless, a below-average proportion of these pupils attain the higher Level 5 in these subjects.
- Most pupils eligible for free school meals attain at least as well as their classmates, although the attainment of both groups lags behind similar pupils across the country.
- The achievement of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs varies. While some of these pupils make good progress, some with poor attendance and/or who also speak English as an additional language do not do well. This is because there are not enough small-group lessons outside the classroom to meet their complex needs.
- Good teaching enables children to make steady progress in Nursery and Reception and gaps with national expectations are starting to close. The poor quality of the outdoor area restricts opportunities for children to develop their communication, numeracy and social skills.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Over time, teaching has not been good enough to make sure that all groups achieve well. Although teaching is improving, its impact on pupils' learning is not consistently or securely effective.
- Teachers do not always link tasks carefully enough to make sure that pupils work at a fast pace. Similarly, some tasks which more-able pupils complete without the teacher's help are not hard enough. Teachers often do not make enough use of questioning to check how well pupils have understood new ideas and to encourage them to explain their thinking.
- The teaching of early reading skills is uneven. In Nursery and Reception, tasks are carefully matched to children's different language levels. In some lessons, teachers make sure that pupils systematically increase their knowledge of the sounds that letters make. Teachers immediately ask pupils to pick these out in the teacher's phrases on the whiteboard. Pupils enjoy this challenge and use them correctly in their own short sentences. However, teachers do not always choose carefully the texts younger pupils read to enable them to apply their skills confidently in their wider reading.

- Specialist teaching in small-group work enables pupils at an early stage of learning English as an additional language to make good progress in speaking and writing as the teacher uses signals, words and pictures expertly to develop pupils' language skills.
- The teaching of mathematics is uneven. Some lessons do not provide pupils with good opportunities to apply their mathematical knowledge in investigative or problem-solving tasks. However, in other lessons observed, for example in Years 2 and 3, the teachers' careful planning, regular checking and precise questions enabled all groups of pupils to practise their mathematical skills well.
- Teaching assistants usually support disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs well when these pupils are given work to do on their own. This was seen, for example, in a Year 5 lesson, when these pupils accurately re-told and noted down from memory the key features of a news report. Sometimes, teaching assistants are too passive in those parts of lessons where the teacher is teaching the whole class.
- Marking is inconsistent. Teachers' comments and use of pupils' targets do not always provide pupils with clear guidance and there is little evidence of pupils responding to these comments.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils requires improvement**

- A significant minority of pupils in the younger year-groups, especially the most recent arrivals, lose concentration quickly in lessons if they are not directly supervised by an adult or the work is not set at the right level for them. On the other hand, younger pupils' enjoyment of playing and singing together, and the trusting relationships they form with staff support their good behaviour in public areas.
- Nursery and Reception children develop warm relationships with staff, who provide them with clear guidelines for behaviour and the right mix of praise, encouragement and support to enable them to settle happily into school life. Children thrive indoors, but the poor quality of the outdoor area restricts opportunities for them to extend their social skills.
- By Year 4, most pupils have adapted to staff's good expectations for their behaviour. They have formed friendships with each other and show a keen interest in learning. This helps them to make more rapid progress in Years 5 and 6. Although they are friendly to visitors, older pupils do not always behave well at break-times in the playground.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well in some lessons and through some writing tasks where they consider newsworthy items from different points of view. In other lessons, teachers miss opportunities to cultivate pupils' independence and self-esteem.
- Staff manage pupils' behaviour well in lessons and assemblies. Pupils and staff have worked hard together to make lunchtimes more enjoyable by increasing the range of activities in which pupils can take part.
- The school works well with pupils who find it hard to manage their own behaviour. 'The Nest' is a nurture group which provides a safe haven for pupils who find it difficult to settle comfortably into school life. It enables many of them to make good gains in their social and academic development.
- Parents are confident that their children are safe in school. Pupils confirm this view and say that they learn in lessons and assemblies the most important things they need to know in order to

stay safe, for example about cyber-bullying and 'stranger danger'.

- As very many pupils only attend school for a short time, leaders find it hard, despite their best efforts, to raise below-average levels of attendance.

## **The leadership and management**

## **requires improvement**

- Senior leaders know the school well and have a realistic understanding of its effectiveness. Improvement plans are detailed and show a sound understanding of school priorities. However, there is sometimes too long a delay between leaders taking actions to raise pupils' achievement and checking to see if these are working well or not. Actions taken are described but not analysed closely to identify what needs to be done next, and quickly.
- Senior leaders have correctly made the coaching and training of new, inexperienced staff their first priority. This is proving successful in helping these teachers develop their expertise. Other training has also been useful in enhancing the skills of the 'Nest' staff and in improving teaching and raising the attainment of some groups of pupils. However, leaders have not made sure that all staff learn well from each other and this results in some inconsistencies in pupils' rates of progress.
- Staff have suitable targets to improve their performance, but the cycle of observations that leaders use to check up on staff's work is not frequent or precise enough to make sure that the quality of teaching rapidly improves.
- Leaders' use of pupil premium funding has not yet had a full impact on tackling discrimination and disadvantage and on raising the achievement of all the pupils for whom this money is allocated. Funding is used specifically to employ additional staff to support eligible pupils who are at risk of falling behind.
- Leaders have protected the school's reputation for ensuring pupils' wellbeing at a time of great changes in the pupil population. Parents rightly believe that the school provides a welcoming, supportive environment for their children. Safeguarding arrangements meet all statutory requirements.
- Guidance and support provided by the local authority has recently been stepped up and is starting to have a very positive impact on school improvement.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors understand the strengths and weaknesses in teaching and pupils' achievement. They know how well pupils' achievement, particularly that of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, compares with pupils in other schools. They have not received enough information about senior leaders' reasons for allocating pupil premium funding in particular ways to enable them to judge whether this expenditure is raising achievement for this group. Governors have an accurate overview of what is done to reward good teachers and tackle underperformance. Their self-improvement plans highlight the impact of training they have undertaken. They are actively involved in checking health and safety and safeguarding arrangements.

## 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>	112778
<b>Local authority</b>	Derby
<b>Inspection number</b>	405423

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	321
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Lisa Allen
<b>Headteacher</b>	Carol Moore
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	15 March 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	01332 346230
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