

West Blatchington Primary and Nursery School

Hangleton Way, Hove, BN3 8BN

Inspection dates

6–7 February 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		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

- Pupils do not make good enough progress in reading, writing and mathematics in all classes in Key Stages 1 and 2.
- Teaching over time has not been effective in securing pupils' good achievement, especially that of middle-ability pupils. Recent improvements in teaching have not had long enough to secure pupils' good achievement.
- Pupils make slower progress in writing and mathematics than in reading. Pupils are not given enough opportunities to use their mathematics and writing skills in different subjects.
- Subject leaders do not yet play a sufficiently strong role in checking the quality of teaching and in the school's drive to improve pupils' achievement.
- Sometimes pupils become unsettled during lessons and there are differences in teachers' expectations between classes.

The school has the following strengths

- The rate of improvement has increased recently due to the shared determination of school leaders to address the school's weaknesses.
- Pupils feel safe and relationships are good. Attendance has improved to above average levels.
- Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage, where recent improvements in the quality of teaching mean that children learn well and behaviour is good.
- Governors have become more confident in holding the school to account, in using and understanding performance data, and in checking that funds are being used appropriately to raise pupils' achievement.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in 26 lessons and part lessons, including a joint observation with the acting headteacher.
- Discussions were held with the acting headteacher, the Chair of the Governing Body, a local authority representative, senior leaders, staff, parents and pupils.
- Inspectors took account of 43 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) as well as talking to parents informally during the inspection.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and analysed a range of documents and policies, including the school improvement plan, information about pupils' progress, attendance records, safeguarding documents and a sample of pupils' work.

Inspection team

Julie Sackett, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Victoria Turner

Additional Inspector

Fiona Robinson

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils in receipt of the pupil premium (additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, service families and children in local authority care) is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action, school action plus, or who have a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language is above average and increasing. There are no predominant groups.
- The school has a specialist facility for pupils whose statement of special needs includes a diagnosis of autistic spectrum conditions (ASC Unit), which was included in this inspection.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- The acting headteacher was appointed in September 2012.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.
- The school has a nursery and a breakfast club, both of which are managed by the school and were included in this inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching in Key Stages 1 and 2 so that it is at least good by ensuring that:
 - work is consistently matched to all pupils' needs, so that it is neither too hard nor too easy.
 - teachers do not speak to the whole class for too long, so that pupils have regular opportunities to contribute their own thoughts and ideas during whole-class sessions
 - teachers' marking of pupils' work is of the same good quality in different subjects, including written suggestions to help pupils to improve their work
 - teachers' expectations of pupils' behaviour are consistently high so that pupils behave well all the time.
- Raise pupils' achievement, especially for middle-ability pupils, in writing and mathematics by:
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to practise and apply their writing and mathematics skills in different subjects
 - ensuring that teachers' expectations of pupils' writing and mathematics work are consistently high in different subjects.
- Strengthen the role played by subject leaders in checking how well teaching is supporting pupils' achievement.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils do not make consistently good progress as they move through the school. Historical weaknesses in teaching mean that there are gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills, so that achievement over time is not good enough. Pupils' progress across Key Stages 1 and 2 is uneven due to differences in the quality of teaching between subjects and year groups.
- There are variations in the progress made by pupils of different abilities, and in different subjects. For example, middle-ability pupils make slower progress than other groups due, in part, to an increased focus on the most- and least-able pupils. Progress in writing and mathematics is consistently weaker than in reading because there are too few opportunities for pupils to apply basic skills in different subjects.
- School tracking shows that recent improvements in teaching are accelerating pupils' progress, particularly in Key Stage 1. This demonstrates the school's capacity to improve. However, these improvements are in their infancy and have not impacted fully on overall achievement.
- Although attainment over time has typically been below average, there has been a steady upward trend in attainment in the last three years, with a particularly marked improvement in 2012. However, whilst attainment in reading was close to the national average, attainment in writing and mathematics remained below the national average. Better teaching and higher expectations mean that a greater proportion of pupils are gaining the higher levels in mathematics and English.
- Children's skills and understanding when children join the school are typically below those expected of their age. Improved teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage, with a focus on the development of children's language and speaking skills, has now secured more rapid progress, particularly in their writing skills and personal development.
- The results of the phonics (the link between sounds and letters) screening check for Year 1 pupils in 2012 were below average. The school responded by developing teachers' skills in teaching phonics. As a result, phonics lessons are now pitched at the appropriate level, and extra help has been provided for older pupils to address gaps in their knowledge. School tracking information shows that these steps are proving successful in securing more rapid progress.
- The progress made by pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs is broadly average, but accelerating. This is due to more robust procedures for checking pupils' progress so that support is provided more quickly for those pupils who need extra help.
- Pupils benefiting from pupil premium funding make broadly average progress although, in line with most groups in the school, their progress is accelerating. This is due to the effective use of the funding to provide support, including short-term courses, to boost reading, writing and mathematics skills. While the average point score for this group was below the national average in 2012, the gap between this group and pupils nationally is narrowing.
- Pupils who attend the ASC Unit make at least good progress because learning is matched very accurately to their needs and expectations are high.
- Pupils with English as an additional language make good progress when they have been in the school for an extended period of time.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching over time has not been good enough to ensure that all pupils achieve well. Although it is improving, and pupils make good progress where teaching is better, the overall quality of teaching is too inconsistent.
- Teachers' questioning during lessons is not always used well to check pupils' understanding and build on their learning. Sometimes, pupils are not given enough to do or think about when the teacher is talking to the whole class; consequently, they become disengaged and their progress

slows. At other times, the work set for pupils is either too easy or too difficult.

- Where teaching is most effective, teachers use different approaches to suit pupils' needs. Their activities are therefore more interesting, and their learning is better.
- Teaching assistants play an improved role in supporting pupils. As a result, the progress made by pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs is accelerating.
- While work is generally well marked in English, with written comments to help pupils to improve their work, this is not always the case in other subjects. However, pupils know their targets and so have a growing sense of their own progress and of the role they can play in their own learning.
- Specialist staff in the ASC Unit understand their pupils' needs, regularly reinforce and build pupils' personal and social skills, and insist that they always do their best. As a result, pupils who attend the unit, in addition to lessons in the main school, make at least good, and sometimes outstanding, progress.
- Guided reading lessons take place regularly. Recent training has been successful in making sure that teachers have a better understanding of how they can help pupils to improve their reading skills, leading to more rapid progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils do not behave consistently well across the school. Where teaching is less effective, teachers' expectations are not consistently high enough, pupils become unsettled, and their progress slows.
- Improvements in behaviour, particularly noticeable in the younger year groups, are beginning to extend across the school. Relationships between adults and pupils in all year groups are good, and most pupils show respect for adults and for each other. Pupils enjoy learning when activities are stimulating and matched accurately to their needs.
- Pupils who attend the ASC Unit behave well because specialist teachers' expectations of pupils' behaviour are very clear.
- Pupils feel that behaviour in school is generally good, although they told inspectors that sometimes pupils say unkind things to each other. Pupils know what bullying is, how hurtful it can be, and are aware of some of the different types of bullying.
- Pupils say that they feel safe, and most parents agree. Pupils know what to do if they have any concerns, and are confident that adults will sort out any worries very quickly. They have a sensible view of how they can help to keep themselves safe. For example, they know about the risks of giving out personal information on the internet.
- There has been a marked decrease in the number of fixed-term exclusions, with none in the current year. Attendance and punctuality have improved because they are rigorously monitored by senior leaders. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated. School records show that any incidents are recorded and followed up promptly and appropriately.
- The breakfast club provides a calm and positive start to the school day for those pupils who attend.

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- Although the acting headteacher, ably supported by the acting deputy headteacher, has expertly steered the school through an unsettled time, the pace of improvement since the last inspection has been too slow.
- Senior leadership has developed well, but subject leaders are not yet fully effective in checking how well teaching is supporting pupils' achievement, although their roles are beginning to develop.
- The acting headteacher's determination to secure the best for all pupils, regardless of background or ability, has been instrumental in securing more recent improvements in teaching

and in behaviour. Staff morale is good and parents express confidence in the school, demonstrating increased capacity to drive improvement.

- There is now a clear focus on improving the quality of teaching, and an element of weak teaching has been eradicated. Staff performance is closely checked and coaching is effectively matched to support training needs. As a result, teachers have an increased understanding of their responsibilities for pupils' achievement, and expectations have been raised. However, while teaching has improved in some year groups, there are still inconsistencies.
- The school knows itself well and has accurately identified what it needs to do to improve further. The acting headteacher has established effective procedures to check pupils' progress and to provide additional support where needed.
- The local authority has provided helpful support for the school, including training for the governing body in the use of pupil progress data.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced and makes a positive contribution to the development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. A wide range of clubs contributes well to pupils' increasing enjoyment of school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have strengthened their role in checking the work of the school and in challenging leaders. They now have an accurate picture of the quality of teaching and know how performance management is used to reward and support teachers' practice. The Chair of the Governing Body has introduced higher expectations, and training events are helping to clarify governors' understanding of their roles. Governors are increasingly confident in comparing the school's performance with other schools nationally, and in checking how well funds, such as pupil premium, are being used to raise pupils' achievement. However, there has not yet been enough time for improvements to impact fully on the pace of improvement. The governing body ensures that safeguarding arrangements meet requirements and are rigorously enforced.

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	114425
Local authority	Brighton and Hove
Inspection number	401432

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

Type of school	All-through
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	413
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Michael Jennings
Acting Headteacher	Rachel Simmonds
Date of previous school inspection	11 May 2010
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