

Mile Oak Primary School

Graham Avenue, Portslade, Brighton, BN41 2WN

Inspection dates

7–8 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		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

- Pupils are not making as much progress in writing as they do in reading and mathematics.
- The most able do not always do as well as they should because work is not always hard enough for them.
- The progress pupils make is uneven because the quality of teaching varies. Expectations are not always as ambitious as they could be, and pupils do not always fully know what is expected of them.
- In some lessons, teachers concentrate too much on the activities which pupils are going to do rather than on what pupils are going to learn from that activity.
- Although teaching and pupil achievement is improving, leadership strategies to accelerate the pace of change have not resulted in improvements being made quickly enough.
- Senior leaders regularly check the quality of teaching. However, some teachers, particularly those more recently appointed, have not yet benefited from opportunities to share best practice.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils have positive attitudes toward their learning, share their ideas with each other and work well together in lessons.
- Children get off to a good start in Reception because sessions are planned well so that children learn and develop successfully.
- The school provides exceptional care for its pupils so that they feel safe and behave well.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well through a wide range of enrichment activities and opportunities provided by the school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in 27 lessons taught by 21 teachers. Almost all were jointly seen with the headteacher or deputy headteacher. In addition, the inspection team made five shorter visits to lessons and provision for pupils learning outside the classroom to focus on specific aspects.
- Inspectors listened to three groups of pupils read and visited three assemblies.
- Meetings were held with a group of pupils, the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, the inclusion manager and the Chair of the Governing Body. There was a meeting with a representative of the local authority to discuss the range and impact of support provided for the school.
- During the inspection there were eight responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), too few to record or evaluate parents' views. Inspectors looked at the school's recent parent survey and spoke to 21 parents while they were bringing or collecting their children to and from school. No staff questionnaires were returned.
- The inspection team observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school's information on pupils' progress for the last three years, and notes of visits made by the school partnership adviser. Inspectors looked at self-evaluation and school improvement documentation, planning, assessment information, documentation on the management of teachers' performance, minutes of governing body meetings, and school policies and records relating to behaviour, safety and attendance. The school's safeguarding procedures were also evaluated.

Inspection team

Wendy Forbes, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Val Ives	Additional inspector
Juliette Jaggs	Additional inspector
Mary Hoather	Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Mile Oak is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Pupils are taught in single-age classes in all year groups, including those in the three Reception classes in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- An above-average proportion of pupils are eligible for the pupil premium.
- Most pupils are White British. The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic groups and those whose first language is not English are below average.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The school provides a daily breakfast club for pupils, and this formed part of the inspection.
- The school has experienced much staff absence and many changes in its staffing organisation since the last inspection. A number of classes are currently being covered by temporary teaching staff.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better, by:
 - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can do, so that they can all achieve well
 - making sure that teachers make clear to pupils what they are learning in classroom activities
 - teachers planning and organising activities which enable pupils, whatever their need, to join in whole-class activities.
- Accelerate pupils' progress in writing, particularly for the most able, by:
 - ensuring that teachers provide activities that more accurately match pupils' different abilities and provide just the right level of challenge
 - improving the teaching of basic literacy skills in order to strengthen pupils' use and application of punctuation, spelling and grammar in their writing
 - providing more opportunities to develop writing skills across all subjects.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that senior leaders:
 - provide more opportunities for teachers to share best teaching practice
 - encourage teachers to reflect better on how well they are helping their pupils learn
 - check teaching regularly to ensure that all pupils are making good progress.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Although progress in reading and mathematics has recently become much stronger overall, many pupils, especially the more able, have made limited progress because of previous inconsistencies in teaching. In particular, too few pupils have made rapid enough progress between Years 2 and 6 in writing, although it is now improving steadily. In addition, some disruption to learning as a result of staff turnover has left a few pupils with gaps in their learning.
- Despite a significant dip in pupils' attainment in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6 in 2011, by 2012 Year 6 pupils' standards had improved. This was due to the focus on improving teaching, accelerating reading and the better use of assessment information. Most Year 6 pupils made broadly expected progress in reading and mathematics from their starting points at the end of Key Stage 1. School records indicate that learning dipped for some pupils currently at the top end of Key Stage 2 when they were in Years 3 and 4. They are now making up lost ground and benefiting from the strength of teaching in Years 5 and 6.
- Children join Reception with skill levels just below those typical for their age. They progress well in the three prime areas of communication and language, physical development and personal, social and emotional development, as a result of effective teaching and well-planned activities.
- The systematic teaching of letters and sounds (phonics) and promotion of early reading and writing skills have ensured children make good progress in learning to recognise, read and, sometimes, write simple words. Year 1 pupils continue to progress well, achieving just above the national average in the national phonics screening check in Year 1. Year 2 pupils read well, with many already reading above expectations.
- Progress in writing is slower. Until recently, there has not been enough emphasis on providing opportunities to develop pupils' key writing skills across different subjects.
- The progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is similar to that of other pupils at the school. In 2012, pupils supported by the pupil premium achieved average point scores approximately half a level lower than their peers. Funding has been used to provide a variety of support, including the development of emotional and social skills, the understanding and use of letters and sounds to read and write, accelerated reading, and the use and application of number skills to help them develop their communication, literacy and numeracy skills. This is leading to improvements in their rates of progress and is already closing the gap between their achievement and that of their peers. However, a few are regularly withdrawn from whole classroom activities to work with support staff, sometimes missing out on key learning skills in class, which slows their progress.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- In some lessons the pace of learning is slow because expectations are not high enough and work is not sufficiently well matched to pupils' abilities. There is sometimes too much focus on completing tasks rather than on the learning involved. As a result, pupils' interest is lost and learning suffers. When more-able pupils are not challenged sufficiently, for example when questioning is not sharply focused, their response can be that the task is too easy.
- Most teachers mark pupils' work regularly and frequently. Dedicated 'improvement time' helps pupils consider how to improve their work. However, in a few lessons, some teachers do not check pupils' progress frequently enough to see how well they understand or whether the work is too easy.
- Where teaching is effective, teachers hold high expectations, indicate clearly what they want pupils to learn, set a brisk pace and provide imaginative, practical, learning tasks. A good example of this was seen in a lesson in which pupils were investigating magnetic materials.

Pupils' interest was captured and sustained at high levels as they discovered that not everything that was shiny was magnetic.

- The systematic teaching of reading throughout the school, particularly the focus on early reading and systems to accelerate reading, has helped pupils make good gains in learning to read. Actions taken to develop pupils' skills in writing, for example, through changes in the curriculum such as 'Write On' days and the focus on 'Big Writing', have started to improve the quality of work, but still require further development.
- In Reception, children enjoy an exciting range of activities. Teachers plan opportunities in response to children's interests to develop their use of language. Independence is encouraged and their progress is tracked well over time.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils are respectful, naturally courteous and say behaviour is mostly good.
- They have positive attitudes to school and are keen to share their pleasure and pride in being selected as school ambassadors or 'Book Buskateers', becoming reading champions, feeding the school chickens or serving as a playground buddy, eco rep or member of the school council.
- Typically, pupils get on well with each other, feel safe and show respect and kindness to others regardless of age, race and disability. They have a good understanding of risk, supported well by the school's teaching on personal and internet safety.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how the school promotes good behaviour. They are well aware of the different forms of bullying such as name-calling and internet bullying. They say that bullying is not tolerated by the school and any that occurs is always dealt with effectively by staff.
- Pupils work well together and are happy to talk about their learning and share their ideas with each other. However, in lessons where the pace is slow, pupils sometimes lose focus and learning is slower.
- Most parents who expressed a view feel that behaviour is typically good. The positive atmosphere for learning in the school is evident. Pupils feel confident that adults care extremely well for them.
- The school's efforts to work with families have paid dividends. Attendance has improved and is now above average.
- The school's breakfast club is well organised. Pupils are provided with a range of food and many activities. Pupils say they enjoy this start to their day.

The leadership and management require improvement

- Leaders and managers have not yet secured good teaching and rapid progress in all classes. This is partly the result of the school suffering some disruption to learning caused by previous inconsistencies in teaching which resulted in significant staff changes, leaving a few pupils with gaps in their learning.
- The headteacher has been effective in creating change for the better in the school's learning environment. She is well supported by a leadership team committed to the school's continuing improvement, who have an accurate grasp of the school's strengths and weaker areas. This has led to improvements in reading and mathematics, but there is still some way to go to raise pupils' achievement in writing.
- The headteacher has improved the way in which teachers are appraised. Performance targets relate to pupils' progress, are regularly reviewed to let teachers know how they are performing, and are linked to the level at which teachers are paid. Senior leaders regularly check the quality of teaching, taking steps to eradicate previous weaknesses in teaching. However, the sharing of best practice is not yet fully developed across the school in order to make a difference to all teachers.

- The local authority provides proportionate support in assisting the headteacher with steps to improve the school's performance. The appointment of assessment and numeracy leaders and the development of extended leadership groups have helped to strengthen leadership, resulting in clear improvements in mathematics and reading.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced and makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development, their enjoyment of learning and positive behaviour. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well promoted through a range of clubs and special events, the many opportunities for pupils to take responsibility and work together, and a strong emphasis on the arts and sport. Activities which involve pupils' learning about others' beliefs help to promote tolerance and understanding.
- Pupil premium funding has been allocated effectively, leading to improvements in pupils' reading. This has been as a result of individual and group-reading support and opportunities for learning mentors to work with parents and carers, involving them in home-school reading initiatives.
- The school does not tolerate discrimination and is committed to providing equal opportunities for all pupils.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance has improved since the previous inspection. Governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement and know how it compares to schools nationally. Training ensures governors have sharpened their focus on the school's performance. They ensure that systems to check the performance of teachers are robust and understand the link between performance and teachers' salary progression. They receive information on the quality of teaching and have taken appropriate steps to challenge where teaching has been weak. Governors have a detailed understanding of how the pupil premium funding is spent and its impact. Safeguarding is given high priority by governors to ensure compliance with all statutory requirements.

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	114430
Local authority	Brighton and Hove
Inspection number	401434

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	531
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Greg Barnes
Headteacher	Susan Mines
Date of previous school inspection	13–14 October 2009
Telephone number	01273 294880
Fax number	01273 294882
Email address	office@mileoak.brighton-hove.sch.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2012

