

Sea Mills Primary School

Riverleaze, Sea Mills, Bristol, BS9 2NU

Inspection dates

6–7 February 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The determination of the headteacher, senior leaders and governors in their drive for improvement ensures that teaching is now good. All groups of pupils achieve well.
- Rigorous procedures are in place for checking how well the school is doing and how it could do better. The governing body is supportive and fully involved in helping leaders and managers to move the school forward by sustaining improvements to the quality of teaching and pupils' achievements.
- Pupils make good progress and their attainment in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6 is broadly average.
- Pupils are proud of their school and behave well. They are welcoming and courteous to each other and to visitors. Pupils say they feel safe. Attendance has much improved and is above average. Lateness is rare.
- The curriculum is enriched by many interesting and worthwhile activities so that pupils have a wide range of experiences.
- There are high expectations of all who work at the school; performance is rigorously monitored and any weaknesses are promptly tackled. Morale is high and staff at all levels feel proud to work here.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- In some lessons, more-able pupils are not always given work that challenges them to do their best or to find things out for themselves.
- Some teachers do not always make sure that pupils respond to what has been asked of them when their work is marked.
- Too few pupils attain the higher levels in tests taken at the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 16 lessons or parts of lessons, amounting to 10 hours in total. Four of these lessons were observed jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and visited classrooms with senior staff to look at how well disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs were learning.
- Discussions were held with senior and middle leaders, staff, the Chair of the Governing Body, three other governors, a representative of the local authority and with groups of pupils.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at the school's self-evaluation and planning documents, external evaluations of its work and examples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors took note of the 17 responses to the on-line Parent View survey and spoke to a group of parents and carers at the beginning and end of the school day. Inspectors also analysed 29 questionnaires returned by staff.

Inspection team

Michael Merchant, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Helen Owen

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is a smaller-than-average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage and the proportion of pupils who are learning English as an additional language is small.
- The proportion of pupils that are known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding from the government for groups of pupils including those known to be eligible for free school meals) is above average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is average, whilst the proportion of pupils supported through school action plus, or with a statement of special educational needs, is above average.
- The school does not use any alternative provision for its pupils.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment.
- The school has a breakfast club, managed by the governing body.
- A new headteacher and deputy headteacher have been appointed since the last inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the amount of outstanding teaching so that more pupils make faster than expected progress by making sure that:
 - tasks planned by teachers in lessons always get the most out of the most able pupils
 - teachers spend less time talking in lessons and give more time for pupils to learn in more active ways by working things out for themselves and talking about their work with others.
- Raise pupils' attainment so that pupils achieve levels which are consistently above the national average by ensuring that:
 - effective techniques to improve higher-level mathematical and writing skills are used consistently in all classes
 - every pupil responds to the helpful marking provided by most teachers.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children enter the Nursery class with skills, knowledge and understanding below those typical for their age. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children make good progress, especially in reading where good attention is paid to children's ability to blend sounds and letters into words (phonics).
- All groups of pupils make good progress across the rest of the school. They reach standards of attainment by Year 6 that are broadly average and rising year on year.
- The school has made big improvements in the way it teaches reading. These have been successful and have resulted in strong gains in pupils' ability to link sounds and letters. Standards in reading are improving year on year. By the end of Year 2 and by the time pupils leave at the end of Year 6, pupils' reading abilities are in line with those expected and, for some, better. The school has completely eliminated the gap between the reading skills of boys and girls and many of the boys are now eager readers.
- Not enough pupils reach the higher levels, particularly in writing and mathematics. This is because ways to encourage pupils to reach the higher levels in their number and writing work. Effective ways to encourage pupils to solve number problems expressed in words, and using paragraphs and a wide range of punctuation, are not consistently used in all classes.
- Pupils who are disabled and those who have special educational needs receive good quality care and attention and are well supported in class. As a result, these pupils make good, and sometimes better, progress given their starting points.
- Those pupils who are supported by the pupil premium make progress that is similar to, and sometimes better than, others in the school. The school has wisely used this funding to buy in extra help for these pupils and to ensure that they are completely included in all the school has to offer. School leaders and governors ensure that this extra support is working. For instance, in the national tests taken at the end of Year 6 in 2012, the attainment of pupils entitled to the pupil premium was similar to other pupils in the school.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching has improved since the last inspection and is consistently good throughout the school, with some that is outstanding.
- Most lessons are lively and fast paced. Teachers expect a lot of pupils, both in terms of work rate and in intellectual demand. Teachers and other adults work very well together in most classes and plan lessons that get the best out of pupils.
- Teachers use questions well to encourage pupils to think and debate their work with others. They also use pupils' responses to gauge how well pupils have understood an idea and often make changes to their lessons to take account of any misunderstandings.
- Pupils respond by showing interest and enthusiasm for their work. They have good powers of concentration and persist when faced with difficulty. Pupils collaborate well to complete tasks and are keen to take part in group tasks and class discussions.
- In the best lessons, pupils become absorbed in their work, relish the challenge and work flat out, putting energy and thought into all they do. For example, in an outstanding Year 1 English lesson, the teacher's masterly use of questions teased out ideas from all groups of pupils and prompted them to enthusiastically think up a range of ideas to plan and then write a story.
- Teaching is not yet outstanding because some teachers do not do enough to ensure that the most able pupils are stretched as much as they could be in lessons. Some talk too much in lessons and give too much direction. Although most marking is thorough, some teachers do not always check to see that pupils are acting on the advice previously given.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Most pupils are positive about their learning, describing how teachers make learning interesting. They particularly enjoy the wide range of educational visits and after-school activities.
- Behaviour is typically good and contributes well to the progress pupils make, as it ensures that lessons run smoothly. Occasionally, when the pace of learning slows, a few pupils get restless and their interest wanes.
- Behaviour is good both at the well-supervised breakfast club and during the after-school activities.
- Pupils and parents say that bullying is rare. Pupils have a good understanding of the different forms of bullying and what to do if it happens.
- Pupils are clear about how to keep themselves safe and say that they feel safe in school. They have a thorough understanding about how to keep themselves safe when using the internet.
- Pupils are very polite and welcoming and describe the school as being 'like a family'. They watch out for each other and older pupils act as buddies to help care for the younger pupils.
- Attendance is above average and pupils arrive at school on time, which reflects their enjoyment of coming to school.

The leadership and management are good

- Very strong leadership by a determined headteacher, supported by a very effective deputy and dedicated governing body, has resulted in the school improving from satisfactory to good.
- Leaders have shown a great tenacity to improve teaching and regularly check what is happening in classrooms. Teachers have been given good advice as to how to make their teaching better and training has been put in place, which is carefully linked to the needs of individuals and the school. Staff increasingly share their expertise with each other and with other local primary schools.
- Staff are set targets which are based on the quality of their teaching and the progress pupils make in their classes. This process is managed rigorously and only staff who meet these targets are considered for additional pay.
- All groups of pupils make good progress, which demonstrates the school's commitment to equality of opportunity and absence of discrimination.
- Pupils' progress is checked regularly and prompt additional help is given to any who are in danger of falling behind. The needs of pupils supported through the pupil premium funding are promptly addressed and this has resulted in them making faster progress. Staff have an accurate awareness of pupils' progress and are expected to know the reasons why any are not making sufficient gains. This has been instrumental in ensuring pupils' progress and attainment have increased since the last inspection.
- The support from the local authority has helped the school improve since the last inspection.
- Leaders have a good understanding of the strengths of the school and how it can be made even better. They produce clear action plans to show how these priorities will be tackled, which accurately match the school's needs. This, together with effective action to improve teaching and pupils' achievement, means the school has a secure capacity to move forward.
- The curriculum is rich and imaginative and pupils are given lots of opportunities to improve their reading. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted very effectively.
- Safeguarding and child protection arrangements meet current requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is well informed about all aspects of the school, has an entirely accurate view of the school's performance and is deeply ambitious for the achievement of all pupils. The governors receive data on the progress that pupils make and how effective the school judges teaching in different year groups. They ask probing questions if they think that

attainment or teaching could be better. Governors ensure that finances are well managed. They have a good understanding of how the pupil premium funding has been spent and how it has benefited the pupils because they are aware of its impact on pupil progress. Governors are confident in their roles because they have received a range of training provided by the local authority.

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	135779
Local authority	City of Bristol
Inspection number	406628

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	191
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Julie Sanders
Headteacher	Kirsteen Craig
Date of previous school inspection	17–18 March 2011
Telephone number	0117 903 0088
Fax number	0117 903 0085
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