

Dudley Infant School

Harold Road, Hastings, East Sussex, TN35 5NU

Inspection dates 27–28 February 2013

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| 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

- Children get off to a good start in the Reception classes and build on this through the school to achieve well. They attain at least average levels of attainment by the end of Key Stage 1 and achieve especially well in writing.
- Teaching is typically good. Pupils who find learning difficult make good progress because they receive good quality care and support.
- Pupils' personal development and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength and as a result, they behave well and the caring relationships between staff and pupils help them to feel safe.
- The headteacher is an ambitious and effective leader. She has created a strong team of leaders that includes governors. Together, they have an accurate view of the school's effectiveness. There have been many improvements since its previous inspection, particularly in the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.
- The exciting curriculum that includes visits beyond school and interesting visitors extends pupils' interests and ensures they enjoy their learning.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The quality of teaching is not yet outstanding because teachers do not always ensure that pupils' learning is rapid and challenging, and not all marking is of the highest quality to move pupils on to the next stage of their learning.
- The school's leaders, including governors, do not all make full use of the wide range of information available to them to pinpoint precisely enough how to lead the drive for further improvement in pupils' achievement.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching in 16 lessons or part lessons, of which four were conducted jointly with senior leaders.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher, other staff, the Chair and Vice Chair of Governors and a parent governor.
- The inspectors held discussions with pupils, heard others read and had a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors looked at a range of documents, including plans for improvement, information on pupil progress, the school’s monitoring information, safeguarding and attendance documents, governing body documentation and school policies.
- There were 29 responses to Ofsted’s on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and inspectors received a few letters from parents which were taken account of during the inspection.
- The inspectors also considered the 18 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Sheila Browning, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Peter Hare

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average infant school.
- Teaching is carried out in two form entry classes in each year group.
- The proportion of disabled pupils or those with special educational needs supported by school action is higher than average.
- The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is broadly average.
- Most pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium (additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children who are looked after by the local authority and the children of service families) is above average.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement so that they are outstanding by:
 - ensuring that the best teaching practices in the school are shared so that a greater proportion of teaching is outstanding
 - leaders, including governors, using information more precisely to identify emerging trends and then drive developments for further improvement. Whilst they have a good overview of the progress pupils make in general, they do not have the fine detail that would help them to challenge the school more precisely, for example detailed information on the progress pupils eligible for pupil premium make and how this relates to the performance of pupils nationally.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- The majority of children join the Reception class with skills and knowledge that are lower than age-related expectations and are well below in their communication skills and personal, social and emotional development. They make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and build on their early reading, writing, and speaking skills effectively because the teaching of phonics (the links between letters and sounds) is consistently of good quality.
- Learning is made exciting; for example, children used their knowledge of Jack and the Beanstalk to re-enact the story in Jack's cottage underneath an enormous paper beanstalk in the classroom, and retold the story through puppets before writing their own. Outside in the secret garden, with adult help, children learnt about 'nutrition and roots' and counted imaginary magic beans before planting them. Children develop good physical skills, for example riding large bikes and scooters to and from the mock-up garage in the playground.
- Since the previous inspection, pupils' progress has improved. All groups of pupils make good progress, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, because they are so well supported. These pupils have additional support in class, in small groups and, when needed, one-to-one support. This shows the school's commitment to equality of opportunity and reducing discrimination.
- The school uses the additional funding for pupil premium effectively to employ extra staff and to have smaller groups, and subsidises educational visits and clubs after school. As a result, these pupils make the same good progress as others in both English and mathematics as measured by their average point scores at the end of Key Stage 1, and many make better progress than their peers nationally.
- The school uses the results of the national phonics screening check to identify any pupils in need of extra help. Regular guided reading sessions have had a good impact on improving pupils' independent reading skills. By the end of Key Stage 1, and by the time they leave school, pupils enjoy reading and read at levels that are at least average, and are often above. They use the skills they have learned to sound out tricky words and can talk about the characters and events in stories. The close partnership with parents means that children are heard to read regularly at home and school.
- By the time pupils leave the school, their attainment is at least average. A large proportion achieve particularly well in developing their writing and reading skills.

The quality of teaching is good

- The typically good teaching has improved since the previous inspection and ensures that pupils make good progress.
- Teachers plan together to ensure they capture pupils' interests and develop pupils' skills. Generally, teachers match work at the right level, and teaching assistants effectively support the most vulnerable and those who find learning particularly difficult. Very occasionally, opportunities are missed to challenge pupils further so that they learn at a more rapid pace.
- Some high quality and constructive marking was seen, but in a few classes this was not consistently the case. Aware of this, leaders are in the process of sharing the best practice and providing training and support for teachers. Nonetheless, pupils know and can refer to their learning targets. They use 'thumbs up and down' to let the teacher know they have understood, edit their own and each other's work, and offer ideas about how it can be improved.
- Any underachievement is identified quickly due to rigorous tracking and checking of pupils' achievement and attainment in reading, writing and mathematics. Mathematics activities are practical and provide good opportunities for pupils to explore their thinking and reasoning skills, and develop their knowledge.
- Extra support is used well to help any pupil at risk of falling behind, and to plug any gaps in their

learning. Specific programmes to help pupils catch up in reading and writing have had a significant impact on pupils' progress.

- The regular opportunities to practise spelling and handwriting with adult guidance helps pupils to become more confident writers, and a high proportion make better than expected progress, especially in reading and writing. Pupils' work is celebrated; on display are some super writing examples about the 'Baboon on the Moon', and artwork linked to the 'Captivating Castles' topic.
- Topics start with a 'wow', and 'learning adventures' ensure lots of opportunities for pupils to apply their literacy and numeracy skills in different subjects, whether researching animal facts, sorting animals by fur, feather and scales, or comparing the school's 100th birthday timeline to their family history.
- Among the strengths in teaching are the use of questioning to check pupils' understanding and to pick up on any misconceptions, and the use of a wide range of resources, including 'working walls' to support learning in literacy and numeracy.
- Positive relationships mean that pupils confidently share their ideas and 'will have a go'.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The strong nurturing 'family feel' helps pupils to develop self-confidence and self-esteem and develop good attitudes to learning. Pupils are polite, take turns when talking or sharing equipment such as the large trikes in the playground, and readily help each other. Pupils say they are safe and enjoy school. Most parents that responded to Ofsted's Parent View, or to the school's own questionnaire, agree.
- Pupils behave well, play well together, and are sensitive to each other's needs and differences, promoted in particular through their links and charitable work with an infant school in Sierra Leone.
- Pupils told inspectors that a few pupils find it hard to 'be good all of the time' but they know the school rules and try to be kind. Pupils have an understanding of bullying and say that on the rare occasions it occurs, it is mostly name-calling or falling out with each other, and Year 2 play-buddies and adults are at hand to 'sort it out'.
- The school council helps pupils develop their sense of responsibility, and they are proud of their role. As school ambassadors, they have attended local school council meetings and have questioned the local Member of Parliament.
- Behaviour is not typically outstanding because in a few lessons where the work is not pitched at the right levels, pupils find it hard to stay focused and do not behave as well as they could. Most parents and pupils spoken to agreed that behaviour was typically good.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher is clear about what she wants to achieve. She, the staff, and governors, are united in their ambition for children to achieve the skills for 'lifelong learning' in a secure, creative and enjoyable learning environment. They have an accurate knowledge of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. The school's own self-evaluation is a true picture of what the school has achieved, and highlights key areas to improve. However, not all leaders always delve deeply enough into analysing information on pupils' progress to identify more precisely the drive for further developments.
- Since the previous inspection, the headteacher has formed a new leadership team with an increased capacity for further improvement. Together with governors, they share a vision for the school to become a centre of excellence, and the school's improvement since the previous inspection reflects this determination. Teachers value the considerable support and professional development they receive and say they have grown professionally. Leaders have successfully created a culture of accountability for pupils' progress and school improvement. A comprehensive programme of checks on teaching quality linked to teachers' performance and

pay is in place.

- Secure systems are embedded, especially for gathering information about the progress pupils make. Regular pupil progress meetings give a clear picture of how well each pupil is progressing and, where progress is lacking, the action that is being taken.
- The local authority provided considerable support at the school's request after its previous inspection and this is valued. The local authority support ceased in February 2012, in response to the school's improving effectiveness. Since then the school has employed independent consultants to deliver bespoke training.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors bring considerable experience to their role, are committed to the good of the school, and have raised their game since the last inspection. However, whilst they have a good overview of the progress pupils make in general, they do not yet have the fine detail that would help them to challenge the school more precisely. For example, they do not have detailed information on the progress that pupils eligible for pupil premium make and how this compares with the performance of pupils nationally. They do check the school's provision and seek parents' views on a range of matters. Governors are well informed about the targets set for teachers and understand how pay is related to pupils' performance. Governors have benefited from training to sharpen their own practice. They ensure that safeguarding practices meet requirements.

What inspection judgements mean

| School | | |
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| 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

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| Unique reference number | 114455 |
| Local authority | East Sussex |
| Inspection number | 401440 |

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

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| Type of school | Infant |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 4–7 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 179 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | William Hamilton |
| Headteacher | Joanne McCarron-Charles |
| Date of previous school inspection | 20 January 2010 |
| Telephone number | 01424 422981 |
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