

Maidenbower Junior School

Harvest Road, Crawley, West Sussex, RH10 7RA

Inspection dates 28 February–1 March 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' achievement requires improvement because not enough pupils are making the good progress they should, given their starting points.
- Attainment in recent years has declined overall.
- Teachers do not always match tasks sufficiently closely to pupils' interests and abilities, or adapt them during lessons if pupils' progress is faster or slower than expected.
- Teachers' marking of pupils' written work does not always include sufficiently detailed information to enable pupils to know what they need to do next to improve its quality.
- Leaders have not yet succeeded in eliminating all instances of weak teaching, and have not set sufficiently high targets for pupils' achievement.
- A significant minority of parents do not believe that they receive enough information about their children's progress and how to help them at home.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils behave well, feel very safe at school, and have very few concerns about bullying.
- Pupils enjoy reading, and standards in this area are consistently above average.
- Disadvantaged pupils, including pupils who are disabled and those with special educational needs, make good progress because teachers and teaching assistants support them well.
- Leaders have accurately identified the causes of pupils' previous underachievement in mathematics, and pupils currently at the school are making better progress in this subject.
- Governors know how well the school is doing and are prepared to hold school leaders to account.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 26 lessons taught by 23 teachers, three of them together with school leaders. They also listened to pupils read, looked at examples of pupils' work, made shorter visits to a number of other lessons, and attended an assembly.
- Inspectors held discussions with groups of, and individual, pupils, three members of the governing body, including the Chair and Vice-Chair, members of staff and, informally, with a number of parents and carers. They also spoke by telephone with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school's own information on pupils' attainment and progress. They examined safeguarding procedures and records of the school's own lesson observations and scrutinised self-evaluation and planning documents.
- In planning and carrying out the inspection, inspectors took account of 104 responses to the online survey (Parent View), which were submitted before and during the inspection, as well as parents' responses to the school's own most recent survey, and 45 questionnaires completed by members of the teaching and support staff.

Inspection team

Robin Gaff, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Helen Howard

Additional inspector

Bill James

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a much larger-than-average primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- Just over one in ten pupils are supported through school action, and about one in seven is supported at school action plus or has a statement of special educational needs. These proportions are both above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium, which is the funding for children in local authority care, for children of service families and for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, is well below the national average. There are no looked-after children or children from service families currently on roll.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school has a Special Support Centre which caters for up to 12 children who have statements of a special educational needs, in this case, for dyslexia.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the proportion of good and better teaching by ensuring that teachers:
 - plan activities which closely match the abilities of their pupils, fully engage their interest and enable them to make as much progress as they can
 - adapt tasks during lessons when pupils are making faster or slower progress than teachers had anticipated
 - give pupils sufficiently detailed written feedback about their work, so that they know the next steps they need to take to improve it.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that leaders take pupils' progress sufficiently into account when judging the quality of teaching
 - eliminating all instances of weak teaching
 - senior leaders and the governing body setting high enough targets to ensure that all pupils achieve well.
- Involve parents more effectively in their children's learning by making sure that they receive sufficient information about their children's progress, and advice about how they can help them.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils join the school with above-average standards of attainment in English and mathematics.
- The results of national tests in recent years have shown a fall in attainment overall and that pupils have made less-than-expected progress by the end of Year 6.
- In some lessons, pupils are not expected to work as hard as they could because, as some pupils say themselves, the tasks are too easy. As a result, their progress is slower than it should be.
- Pupils are not always given sufficient opportunities to undertake writing tasks which are directly related to their individual levels of attainment, which limits their ability to make consistently good progress.
- The standards of work of current pupils show that the school has halted the decline in attainment and that pupils are now making better progress over time, especially in mathematics, although not always as much as could be expected, given their starting points. Teachers have helped pupils to improve in areas in which they were weaker, such as mental arithmetic. The school is also giving extra support to those pupils who find it difficult to grasp mathematical techniques. This is helping them to catch up with their classmates.
- Pupils' performance in national tests in reading has been consistently above average. Pupils read fluently, show a good understanding of the links between sounds and letters, and are keen to talk about the range of books they have read.
- Pupils can write imaginatively and convincingly, especially when topics catch their interest and when work is well matched to their needs. This has been the case especially for Year 6 pupils, many of whom have completed well-researched and well-written 'diaries', based on their study of the Second World War.
- The attainment in English and mathematics of those pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium, as indicated by their performance in national tests, is similar to that of other pupils in the school and is broadly in line with that of all pupils nationally. These pupils are making good progress because the school is spending the additional money it receives to good effect on extra teaching and support for them.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs also achieve well because of the additional support they receive from specialist as well as class teachers, and from teaching assistants.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because, although there are examples of good and some outstanding practice, it is not consistently good.
- Teachers include a range of activities in their lessons and often give pupils a choice of things to do. However, they do not always make sure that tasks are suited to pupils' different levels of ability, or ensure that pupils choose demanding enough tasks. This prevents too many pupils from making the good progress of which they are capable, given their starting points.
- Teachers do not always check pupils' learning and progress sufficiently thoroughly during lessons. As a result, they are not in a position to adapt activities when pupils find them too easy, or when pupils become confused or discouraged because they find tasks too hard.
- On occasion, lessons do not engage pupils' interest because teachers talk for too long before allowing pupils to work on their own or with others.
- Teachers mark pupils' work frequently and thoroughly. Their written comments, however, are not always detailed or specific enough to help pupils to know what they have done well and what they need to do to make their work even better.
- Teachers relate well to pupils and most give them sufficient opportunities to learn for themselves and from each other, for example when pupils discuss questions in pairs and then share their

ideas with the rest of the class.

- Teaching is at its best when teachers share with pupils their enthusiasm for the subjects and topics they are teaching, plan activities that match the full range of pupils' abilities and interests, and check their progress regularly.
- This was the case in an outstanding Year 5 English lesson, when pupils were asked to write convincing letters in order to persuade the headteacher to consider changing the school homework policy. The teacher ensured that all groups of pupils made excellent progress in learning what sort of language they should use in order to have the greatest effect. She did so by explaining the task clearly and making it exciting and gave them extra support if they needed it. She also highlighted the best examples of pupils' work as models from which others could learn.
- Teaching for pupils who are disabled and those who have special educational needs, including those who are taught in the Special Support Centre, is good. Teachers throughout the school make good use of teaching assistants and plan activities which are specially adapted to help meet these pupils' specific needs, enabling them to make good progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils feel very safe in school. They have a good understanding of different types of bullying, such as cyber bullying, but say that very little of any kind happens in school. They know that teachers will quickly resolve problems that occur, and pupils are often able to do so themselves without adult assistance, for example by seeking the help of fellow pupils.
- Pupils' good behaviour helps most lessons to proceed smoothly and at a good pace. They work well together on group and paired activities, and generally listen attentively to each other's contributions in class, as well as to their teachers. When, occasionally, pupils behave less well, this is usually because teachers do not provide activities which stretch or engage them sufficiently.
- Pupils from different backgrounds play and work together happily and harmoniously. They are extremely polite and helpful to visitors, and confidently and sensibly share their experience of school with them.
- The school has succeeded in improving the behaviour of the very small number of pupils for whom behaviour had been a cause for concern. As a result, exclusions are few and far between.
- Attendance has been consistently above average, and pupils are keen to get to their lessons on time.
- Most of the parents who responded to the online survey and the school's own surveys agree that the school makes sure its pupils are well behaved. Although a significant minority of those who completed the Parent View questionnaire did not agree that staff deal effectively with bullying, inspectors found very little evidence, including from pupils or staff, to support this view.

The leadership and management require improvement

- Leaders have not yet succeeded in ensuring that teaching is consistently good. They have not taken pupils' progress sufficiently into account when judging the quality of teaching, and have not set teachers high enough overall targets for pupils' attainment to ensure that they can make good progress from their above-average starting points.
- A significant minority of parents who responded to the Parent View and, to a lesser extent, the school's own survey expressed concerns about the extent to which the school gives them valuable information about their children's progress and advice about how to support their children's learning at home.
- Leaders do, however, demonstrate their capacity to bring about improvement in the school. They have successfully addressed the areas for development identified by the last inspection

report, especially the concerns about the school's provision for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. They have increased the frequency and improved the accuracy of their assessment of pupils' progress, and have eliminated specific weaknesses in teaching which have led to pupils underachieving, especially in mathematics. This has enabled them to reverse the decline in pupils' attainment in that subject.

- The school's promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils have good opportunities to develop their skills in music, art and drama, and to learn by working outdoors, for example in the school's small farm, where they help to look after the animals. All pupils are able to develop their knowledge and understanding of different languages and cultures by spending some time learning French, Spanish and German.
- Pupils benefit from a good range of trips and visits, and the school makes good use of pupil premium money to ensure that no pupil is prevented from participating in activities for financial reasons. This, together with the good achievement of disadvantaged pupils, demonstrates the school's success in promoting equality of opportunity and tackling any potential discrimination.
- The local authority has thoroughly assessed the quality of the school's performance and has helped to improve the accuracy of leaders' judgements on how well the school is doing.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are aware of the standards reached by their pupils and understand how this compares with pupils' performance in other schools. They have been prepared to hold school leaders to account, although they have not yet ensured that targets for pupils' overall achievement are high enough to ensure rapid progress for all. They know about the quality of teaching and what leaders have to do to improve its quality, especially in mathematics. Governors understand how leaders check teachers' performance, and that leaders ensure pay increases are linked to successful practice. They regularly update their own skills by attending relevant training courses. They ensure that the school's finances are on a secure footing and are aware of how the pupil premium funding is being used effectively to promote the achievement and well-being of those pupils who are eligible for it. Governors are fully aware of government requirements for safeguarding pupils, and ensure that the school meets them fully.

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	131603
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	402487

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	575
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sarah Pratt
Headteacher	Chris Murphy
Date of previous school inspection	19–20 January 2010
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