

# North Downs Primary School

Whealers Lane, Betchworth, RH3 7LA

**Inspection dates** 9–10 October 2012

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
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

- Achievement in writing, and to a lesser extent in mathematics, is not of the same standard as in reading where it is consistently good. As a result, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected levels in both English and mathematics by the end of Year 6 is not high enough.
- The quality of teaching is inconsistent. In a minority of lessons activities are not matched closely enough to the ability of the pupils.
- The frequent changes in leadership over the past two years have slowed the pace of improvement. For example, subject leaders have not had sufficient guidance on how to carry out their roles.
- The recently appointed headteacher, although firmly guiding the school to improve, has not been at the school long enough to see through all that needs to be done.

### The school has the following strengths

- Achievement in reading is good and a strength throughout the school. Pupils make good progress and speak with enthusiasm about the books they read.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage provision has improved since the previous inspection and is now good.
- Behaviour and safety are good. Attendance is above average. Relationships at all levels are good and pupils behave well in lessons and around the school.
- The school's focus on pupils' personal development has a very positive effect on their attitudes to learning. This is reflected in the effective way in which pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted.
- The headteacher, supported by senior leaders and the governing body, has a good understanding of where improvement is needed, has a good action plan and is already moving the school forward.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 22 lessons across the three sites that the school occupies. Fifteen of the observed lessons were joint observations with either the headteacher or senior leaders. A number of shorter visits were also made to lessons and small groups. This included the teaching of phonics (pupils learning how to read by learning the sounds and letter patterns in words). Playtimes and lunchtimes were observed across the three sites.
- Inspectors held a number of meetings that included discussions with representatives of the governing body, representatives of the local authority, staff at different levels within the school and parents and carers at the beginning of the school day.
- They looked at a range of documents, including the school improvement plan, the school’s own self-evaluation, achievement data and information relating to the safety and safeguarding of pupils.
- Inspectors met with pupils from Key Stage 2 and heard pupils read from Key Stage 1.
- They took account of 71 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View ) and 31 staff questionnaires received during the inspection.

## Inspection team

Bill James	Lead Inspector	Additional Inspector
Wendy Forbes		Additional Inspector
Linda Rowley		Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- North Downs Primary School is a larger than average school that occupies three sites.
- The Betchworth and Leigh sites both have two classes: Betchworth has one Reception class and one Year 1 and Year 2 mixed class. Leigh has one Reception class and one Year 1 and Year 2 mixed class.
- The Brockham site has single age classes.
- The number of pupils on roll at the school has increased by 70 since the previous inspection.
- Since its formation in September 2010 the school has gone through considerable upheaval with the appointment of five different headteachers. The current headteacher has been in post for 13 weeks.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is low, as is the proportion of pupils who qualify for the pupil premium.
- Most children are from White British backgrounds; none speaks English as an additional language. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported by school action, school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The school meets the current floor standards, the minimum standards expected by the government for pupils' attainment and progress.
- An external provider manages the on-site nursery on the Betchworth site and this is subject to a separate inspection.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By July 2013, improve the quality of teaching overall so that it is consistently good by:
  - ensuring that work is appropriately challenging and appropriately matched to the different abilities of the pupils
  - improving the pace of learning in lessons
  - sharing the good practice that exists in the school.
- Improve the proportion of pupils who are achieving the expected levels in writing and in mathematics at the end of Year 6 by:
  - providing better opportunities for writing, especially writing at length, that meet the needs of pupils' differing abilities
  - involving pupils more in setting their own targets or 'next steps' in writing
  - raising the level of challenge for the most-able pupils.
- Ensure that the leadership and management of the school focus on improving pupils' achievement by:
  - further developing the monitoring role of subject leaders
  - ensuring leaders share the best practice with each other
  - improving the role of the governing body in monitoring pupils' academic performance.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Pupils' achievement varies too much between different areas of learning. Pupils make good progress in reading and reach above average standards by the end of Year 6. In writing, progress is slower, and attainment by the end of Year 6, although broadly average, does not fully reflect what pupils could achieve. As a result, the overall results for English are lower than they should be.
- In mathematics, there is some variability in performance from year to year and also within year groups, largely reflecting the unevenness in the quality of teaching.
- Reading is a real strength in the school. Pupils enjoy the range of reading material available and like the many opportunities they are given to discuss their books. Less-able readers who have just moved into Year 1 are able to use their good knowledge of the sounds of letters to read simple and some more complex words. Those who have just moved into Year 2 persevere well with reading with many already reading above expectations for the time of the year. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs read with determination and growing confidence.
- Children enter the school with a range of abilities, but they are broadly at the levels expected nationally for their age, although lower in speech and language. The provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage, an area for improvement at the previous inspection, is now much more consistent across the three sites. As a result, pupils' progress is now good. Children are already able to independently choose different activities and play together confidently in the outside area. They express themselves clearly and enjoy their learning.
- School leaders recognise that pupils' writing requires improvement and have already taken steps to achieve this. The opportunities for pupils to write at length are improving and pupils are being given better guidance on how to improve their work.
- The recent targeting of resources, such as the English group of eight pupils, set up with the support of the pupil premium, is already showing success. The progress of the pupils involved in this group has accelerated and achievement is good.
- The majority of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are making similar progress to other pupils in school. A small minority of these pupils are making good progress.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Overall, the quality of teaching is too variable. In a minority of lessons, teachers do not make the most effective use of what pupils already know to set appropriately challenging tasks. As a result the pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- In such lessons, the learning lacks pace and the pupils' progress is limited. Pupils are not challenged appropriately so that they can extend their learning. This was evident in a few writing lessons observed, where the most-able pupils were set tasks that they completed quickly and easily.
- In almost all lessons, pupils' attitudes to learning are good and relationships are strong. In the best lessons observed, teachers' expectations were high, the learning was brisk and the activities were well matched to the differing abilities of the pupils. A good example of this was in a Year 2 mathematics lesson where different groups of pupils were completing graphs having been given different resources to do so, depending on their ability.
- Children in all Reception classes enjoy learning from a wide range of fun and interesting activities. Provision for the very youngest children has improved since the previous inspection because of the focus on ensuring parity of provision between classes. The curriculum has also been improved, with a better focus on developing early language and literacy skills. A well-planned induction programme has ensured that children are well prepared for school and settle quickly. As a result they are able, even within a few weeks, to sustain attention reasonably well.

Giggles of delight could be heard as children made character hand puppets from the story of 'The Three Little Pigs' which they used to tell the story.

- The good, systematic teaching of reading throughout the school, particularly the focus on early reading, has helped pupils make good gains in learning to read and reach above average standards.
- Teaching assistants support the pupils' learning effectively in lessons. They are sensitive to pupils' needs and know the pupils well. In a few lessons, teaching assistants were not fully involved when the teacher was explaining activities to pupils.
- Following an initiative led by the headteacher and the senior leadership team, teachers are beginning to make better use of assessment data so that more individual targets can be set for pupils, with a clearer focus on 'next steps' in learning. More time is needed for this to show a clear impact on achievement.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are good

- Pupils are well behaved and this is reflected in their very positive attitudes to school and learning. They are well motivated to learn and recognise that the adults in school take good care of them. Those parents and carers who expressed views overwhelmingly supported this view and said that their children were happy at school.
- There have been no exclusions and there are very few recorded incidents of inappropriate behaviour. Pupils behave well in the vast majority of lessons and this helps learning.
- All pupils, including those in the Early Years Foundation Stage, feel happy, safe and secure. This is supported by the views of parents and carers. Older pupils have a well-developed understanding of how to stay safe and this is successfully supported by the school curriculum, which includes lessons on how to stay safe on the internet.
- A very small minority of parents and carers expressed some concern about behaviour and bullying at the school. However, pupils think that their behaviour is good both in class and around the school and that bullying is rare. The inspection evidence supports this view. Any instances of bullying are very rare and when they do occur, they are dealt with swiftly and effectively by the school.
- Pupils have a good understanding of what is right and wrong and this is successfully fostered by the school's focus on personal development. For example, pupils are very caring towards one another and older pupils often play sensitively with younger ones at play times.
- Pupils are confident yet respectful. They are proud of their school, they like the sense of community and they relate well to both adults and their peers.
- Attendance is above average; pupils like coming to school and most are punctual. They enjoy school and particularly like the way teachers reward good behaviour.

### **The leadership and management** requires improvement

- The new headteacher has been in post for 13 weeks. Together with the senior leaders she has galvanised the different school communities and now there is a belief among staff, parents and carers that the school can move forward.
- The school is fully aware of the areas in achievement and teaching that need improvement. Leaders have formulated a plan with the right priorities which sets out what needs to be done. Senior leaders' judgements during paired lesson observations were accurate.
- Weaknesses in teaching are already being addressed and the observations undertaken by senior leaders and the local authority show improvement.
- Lack of continuity in the leadership of the school has meant that subject leaders have not received sufficient guidance or training in order to fulfil their roles effectively. Their roles have now been defined more clearly and some monitoring is beginning to take place.

- Procedures for performance management have been sharpened up considerably. Staff have now been set challenging targets focusing on pupils' progress in English and mathematics.
  - The curriculum is well organised and is consistently implemented across the three school sites. Pupils say they enjoy their topics and appreciate the opportunities they have in subjects such as music and art. The curriculum is well supported by a range of good-quality after-school clubs and events such as the Year 5 residential trip.
  - The school has received extended support from the local authority during a time of instability in leadership. The local authority has supported the governing body in the appointment of senior staff and has helped with the induction of the new headteacher. Support is currently focusing on achievement in English and mathematics.
  - Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a real strength of the school. The adults in the school act as good role models, with pupils describing them as 'caring and fair'. During assemblies pupils are given the opportunity to reflect and they often centre on issues affecting their own community. Although not culturally diverse, the school takes its responsibility to educate pupils about other cultures seriously and this is reflected in its association with Katine Primary School in Uganda.
  - Since the previous inspection the Early Years Foundation Stage has improved. This, together with the work that the new headteacher and senior leaders have undertaken in a relatively short period of time, demonstrates that the leadership has the capacity to secure improvement in the school.
  - The governance of the school:
    - has supported the teachers, pupils, parents and carers of the school during a period of significant instability in the leadership of the school
    - recognises that it needs to focus more closely on the achievement of pupils, and challenge the school more effectively in this respect
    - currently fulfils its role in providing secure financial management for the school, and all safety requirements are in place.
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## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	124949
<b>Local authority</b>	Surrey
<b>Inspection number</b>	406218

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	405
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Paula Morgan
<b>Headteacher</b>	Angela Ewing
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	20–21 January 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	01737 843384
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