

Laburnum Grove Junior School

Laburnum Grove, Bognor Regis, West Sussex, PO22 9HT

Inspection dates 22–23 May 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		Requires 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 as it is not yet good. This is because teaching quality has been inconsistent over time.
- Teachers do not always ensure that questioning deepens pupils' understanding, or that teaching assistants are well deployed, and inconsistencies in the quality of marking mean that not all pupils benefit from clear guidance on how to improve.
- Pupils' achievement in mathematics is hampered by a lack of challenge in some lessons, insufficient opportunities to solve practical problems and poor presentation.
- Pupils' progress in writing is hampered by insufficient attention to spelling, punctuation and handwriting skills.
- There is not enough analysis of pupils' reading progress so that specific next steps can be set and this slows their overall progress.
- Staff who lead subjects or aspects of school life do not get enough time to develop their roles, check what is happening in the classroom or hold staff to account for the progress their pupils make.
- The headteacher is not thorough enough in checking teaching or in setting clear and measurable targets for staff performance or whole-school improvement.
- Members of the governing body are not careful enough in checking the school's provision and this limits their ability to hold staff fully to account.

The school has the following strengths

- Progress is accelerating across the school, with pockets of good progress in most year groups.
- The use of a published scheme for the teaching of reading, writing and the sounds that letters make (phonics) is helping to improve outcomes for pupils.
- Pupils behave well, enjoy school and are caring and thoughtful towards each other.
- Effective checks on pupils' progress mean that the school is now able to give specific help to those who need it, so they quickly catch up.
- Exciting topics engage pupils' interest and increase their enjoyment and achievement.
- The headteacher is passionate about the pastoral care of pupils; consequently, the school is a strong, caring community where pupils feel safe and well cared for.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed 13 lessons or part lessons, of which several were joint lesson observations with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with a group of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and four other governors, a local authority officer, the leadership team and other senior staff.
- The inspector took account of the 28 responses to the online Parent View survey.
- She observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school's information on pupils' current progress, planning and checks on the quality of teaching, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and documents relating to safeguarding.
- The inspector listened to pupils from Year 3 and Year 5 read.

Inspection team

Janet Sinclair, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Laburnum Grove is a smaller-than-average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The number of pupils eligible for additional funding through the pupil premium (additional funding for pupils in local authority care, from armed forces families, or known to be eligible for free school meals) is above average.
- The school has a breakfast club which was looked at as part of this inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' achievement by ensuring consistently good or better teaching through:
 - less teacher talk and a greater emphasis on questioning that deepens pupils' understanding
 - greater consistency in the quality of marking, so that all pupils are clear about how to improve and are involved in setting the next steps for their learning
 - ensuring that teaching assistants are used well in whole-class sessions.
- Improve the quality of pupils' writing, particularly in Years 3 and 4, by improving their spelling, punctuation and handwriting skills.
- Improve pupils' reading skills by ensuring that their reading is assessed regularly and that the next steps in pupils' learning are clearly known by both staff and pupils.
- Improve achievement in mathematics by providing greater challenge in lessons and more occasions when pupils can use their skills in solving problems, and by expecting better presentation of their work.
- Build the capacity of leadership and management to drive improvement by:
 - ensuring that the headteacher is more thorough in checking teaching and sets clear and measurable targets both for staff performance and school improvement
 - developing the role of staff who manage subjects or aspects of the school and giving them more time to carry out their roles, so that they are more involved in checking pupils' learning and holding staff accountable for pupils' progress
 - ensuring that governors are more rigorous in holding the school to account.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' achievement in English and mathematics requires improvement. Their attainment is broadly average. Progress is accelerating in most classes, and this is due to regular and thorough checks on pupils' progress and additional support given to those pupils who are not doing well enough.
- The school has worked hard to improve writing, and evidence in pupils' writing books, writing assessments and topic work shows an improving picture. However, inconsistencies in marking and insufficient focus on spelling, punctuation and handwriting, particularly in Years 3 and 4, slow down pupils' progress.
- Much has been done to improve provision in reading, including a new scheme for learning sounds and letters, and for reading and writing, daily reading for low-attaining pupils, and regular group reading sessions. Pupils say they enjoy reading, particularly the opportunities they get to read daily to an adult. However, a lack of clear next steps for developing their reading skills slows their overall progress.
- In mathematics, numeracy is covered well and there are regular checks on how well pupils are doing. However, work is not always pitched at the right level for pupils, they are not given enough opportunities for solving practical problems and their work is sometimes untidily presented. This limits their progress.
- The progress of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs requires improvement. However, their progress is beginning to accelerate, with good progress being made in reading due to careful monitoring and focused support from teaching assistants.
- Pupils who attract the pupil premium because they are eligible for free school meals, are looked after or are from services families reached below-average standards in the national tests in English and mathematics in terms of their attainment. Last summer, their results showed that their progress was similar to other pupils in the school in reading, writing and mathematics. The attainment and progress of pupils in the current Year 6 who attract the pupil premium is broadly average in all three subjects. The school is on track to close the gap between them and other groups in the school.
- Careful checks on pupils' progress ensure that those not doing well enough are identified quickly and given small group or individual support to help them catch up. This is helping ensure the gaps in the performance of different groups are closing and is promoting greater equality of opportunity, fostering good relationships and discouraging discrimination.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching over time requires improvement as it has not been good enough to ensure effective learning for all pupils. Although improving, inconsistencies in practice remain and this slows down pupils' progress.
- In mathematics, teachers do not always pitch work at the right level for pupils, so tasks are sometimes either too easy or too difficult. In addition, teachers do not give pupils sufficient opportunities to solve mathematical problems related to real-life situations, so limiting their progress. Pupils' presentation of work is sometimes untidy and this makes it difficult for them to work accurately.
- Teachers ensure that pupils have clear and specific targets and check those regularly to see if they have been met. However, although teachers mark work regularly, they do not always give pupils clear guidance on how to improve or involve them in setting their own learning goals, and this limits pupils' involvement in making their work better.
- In some lessons, a lack of challenging questioning or too much teacher talk means that pupils do not get enough opportunities to extend their ideas or develop their skills.

- Teaching assistants, although providing good support for small groups and individuals, are not used well enough in whole-class sessions and this limits the impact they make on pupils' learning.
- Teaching is improving, with some good teaching enabling good progress. Where lessons are effective, they are well organised and managed, questioning challenges pupils and deepens their understanding, and good use is made of vocabulary specific to different subjects. This was clearly seen in a science lesson in Year 5 and a mathematics lesson in Year 6, where pupils made good progress.
- Good use of resources enhances pupils' learning well. For example, teachers dress up in role as Greek merchants and introduce super hero characters to help pupils' understanding in mathematics.
- Pupils with disabilities and special educational needs, and those known to be eligible for the pupil premium, receive additional support targeted at their needs. Their progress is carefully checked to ensure that they keep up.
- Teachers make sound use of homework, including research for topics, mathematics, spelling and regular reading. This engages pupils' interest and helps to reinforce their learning.
- Teachers make effective use of topic work to provide opportunities for pupils to write in other subjects. For example, pupils write up science experiments or use their descriptive skills in geography.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils mainly behave well in lessons and around the school. However, sometimes, when lessons do not interest them, they become fidgety and inattentive. Behaviour over time has been good and pupils clearly know what is expected of them and generally respond positively.
- The school is very inclusive and conscientious in its support for pupils with identified behaviour problems, ensuring they are catered for extremely well. This minimises any disruption to other pupils.
- The school has no recorded incidents of bullying. Pupils spoken to were confident that there was no bullying, only a few instances of rough play at playtimes. They are aware of the different forms of bullying, such as cyber-bullying, through discussions in assemblies or talks from the police.
- Pupils have good attitudes to school. They say that they enjoy lessons because they are lots of fun. They work together well on tasks when given the opportunity, for example drama work in Year 4. They also enjoy taking on responsibilities such as being school councillors.
- Attendance is broadly average for most pupils. The school works hard to encourage regular attendance and punctuality in all of its pupils. Persistent absentees, including potentially vulnerable pupils, are monitored carefully.
- The school makes sure that it provides a secure environment for its pupils, who feel very safe in school. Pupils say that they are confident of adult support should they need it. They learn about keeping safe through talks from the police, cycling safety training and regular lessons in personal, social and health education.
- The school's breakfast club provides a hearty breakfast for pupils and a calm, positive start to the day.
- Parents and carers who responded to the online Parent View survey strongly agree that behaviour is good and the school keeps their children safe.

The leadership and management require improvement

- Senior leaders have put much in place to bring about improvement since the previous inspection, such as a published scheme for the teaching of sounds and letters, and reading and writing, daily group reading and twice-termly reviews of pupils' progress, to ensure no pupil falls behind. This

has helped to increase pupils' enjoyment of their work and accelerate their progress. Senior leaders know that there is still more to do and have become involved in a project to help them to work towards becoming a good school. This demonstrates the school's capacity for further improvement.

- Leaders of subjects and aspects work hard to bring about improvement in their areas of responsibility. However, they are not all sufficiently involved in monitoring what goes on in classrooms or checking progress data, and do not get enough time to do so. This limits their ability to drive improvements in their areas or subjects.
- The school has an appropriate process for setting staff targets, which means that staff have individual and whole-school priorities linked to improving their performance. However, their targets are not specific enough to enable both staff and leaders to accurately measure improvement.
- The school improvement plan, although very detailed and including action plans for all subjects, does not clearly set out the key areas to be improved and measures of success are not specific enough to enable the school to clearly assess their impact.
- Monitoring of teaching and learning by the headteacher is not effective enough. It is not clearly enough focused on exactly what teachers are doing well and what they need to do to improve to ensure effective learning for all pupils.
- There is a strong focus on inclusion, and the headteacher, in particular, works effectively to enable potentially vulnerable pupils to be integrated successfully into school life.
- Subjects and topics are appropriately planned and taught in an engaging manner that motivates pupils to learn. Pupils say that they enjoy their topics because they are interesting and teachers make them fun. Good use of visits, visitors and after-school clubs enhances the curriculum well.
- The school makes an effective contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Staff make sure that pupils know right from wrong, are considerate and polite, and develop their cultural awareness through, for example, art and French.
- The local authority offers good professional support to the school which is helping senior staff in their drive to bring about improvement. For example, effective support and guidance for the literacy and assessment coordinator has ensured that the school has a very good grasp of pupils' achievement and has successfully introduced a published scheme to develop pupils' understanding of sounds and letters, and their reading and writing skills.
- The school works well with parents and carers, and makes sure they are well informed through regular newsletters, adult learning classes and detailed annual reports on their children's progress. Parents and carers who responded to the online Parent View survey unanimously agreed that they would recommend the school to others.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors fulfil their statutory duties well and have a sound knowledge of the quality of teaching. They monitor the school's finances carefully, including the use of pupil premium funding. However, they do not have a good enough knowledge of pupils' rates of progress in school or how these compare nationally, including the progress of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, and so they cannot clearly monitor this aspect of the school's effectiveness. Governors undertake training to develop their expertise and keep them informed of local and national initiatives. They are involved in setting targets for the headteacher and are aware of a similar process for staff. Consequently, they have a sound knowledge of how the performance of staff links to increases in salary. They are conscientious in ensuring that there are appropriate safeguarding procedures in order to keep pupils and staff safe.

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	125873
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	402360

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	144
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Gez Watson
Headteacher	Philippa Otton
Date of previous school inspection	15–16 September 2009
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