

Slade Green Infant School

Slade Green Road, Erith, Kent, DA8 2HX

Inspection dates 13–14 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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

- Standards in English have been below the national average for three years. Although standards have been average in mathematics, there are gaps in pupils' knowledge.
- More able pupils are not reaching their potential.
- Teaching is not sufficiently demanding to help pupils make good progress. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to work and learn on their own.
- Learning for children in the Nursery is not as good as it is in Reception.
- The school development plan does not set challenging performance targets for all groups of pupils.
- Middle leaders do not play a strong enough role in leading and developing the quality of teaching.
- Governors rely too heavily on evidence collected by external agencies or school leaders and are not sufficiently well informed to be able to challenge the school over its performance.

The school has the following strengths

- Speaking and listening skills are well developed and contribute effectively to learning when pupils work together.
- Pupils eligible for the pupil premium make good progress in their language development as a result of extra programmes for speech and language support.
- There is some good teaching of letter sounds and combinations, (known as phonics) which helps pupils to read with confidence and enjoyment, leading to improvements in reading achievement.
- Pupils behave well and inside and outside of lessons, taking part constructively in lunch and play time activities.
- In Reception classes, the wide range of activities, resources and equipment enables children to be motivated and engaged in their learning. They develop independent learning skills well.
- The resource provision provides a nurturing environment for good social development.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 19 lessons, of which two were joint observations with the headteacher and deputy headteacher. In addition, inspectors made short visits to eight lessons. Each class was observed at least once. Inspectors observed children playing at lunch and playtime and listened to a sample of Year 2 pupils read.
- Inspectors had discussions with the Chair, Vice Chair and three members of the Governing Body, a representative from the local authority, the school progress advisor, the headteacher and deputy headteacher, senior leaders, middle leaders, the teaching staff and a group of pupils.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentary evidence, including the school's records of pupils' progress, documents relating to health and safety, staff vetting procedures and special educational needs, the school website, minutes of governing body meetings, and the school's checks on its progress and priorities for improvement and reports made on the school by the local authority representative. Pupils' written work was also examined.
- Inspectors took account of the school's most recent survey of parents and carers, as there were only 8 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and the results of 32 staff questionnaires. Inspectors met some parents and carers informally at the start of the school day.

Inspection team

Rebekah Iiyambo, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Ann Sydney	Additional Inspector
Peter Thrussell	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an above-average sized infant school.
- An above-average proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language, some of whom are at the early stages of learning English.
- An above-average proportion of pupils are eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in the care of the local authority and for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The school has specially resourced provision for seven pupils with special educational needs.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs identified at school action, school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is lower than in most schools.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage, with those of Black African heritage making up the next largest group.
- The school is in the Anglican Schools Partnership and the Bexley Education Improvement Partnership.
- The school has the Rights Respecting Schools award and is the Bexley Environmental Challenge winner.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of good or better teaching by:
 - ensuring that lessons are more demanding and that more is expected of the pupils, especially the more able
 - developing pupils' independent learning skills with challenging activities that the children can engage with quickly
 - ensuring that activities for children in the Nursery are more purposeful.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - setting more challenging targets for all groups of pupils in order to raise standards in English and mathematics
 - supporting middle leaders to play a greater role in improving the quality of teaching in the areas they are responsible for
 - ensuring governors gain a clear view of the school's effectiveness and the quality of its teaching by collecting first-hand evidence and use information gained to compare their school performance with that of other similar schools and demand improvements from leaders.

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

- Over the last three years, attainment has been below the national average in reading and writing and broadly average in mathematics.
- Work observed in lessons shows that pupils can write using simple sentences. However, pupils are at an early stage of using the 'Magpie walls' in their classrooms to develop more expression in their writing by using a wider range of vocabulary.
- Although in the past, attainment in mathematics has been better than in reading and writing, inspection evidence shows that there are areas in mathematics teaching that also need improving. Pupils can recall number facts, but are much less confident in manipulating hundreds, tens and units.
- More able pupils do not reach their potential because work set in lessons is not always well matched to their ability. It does not always stretch them or move them on to more demanding tasks.
- Children enter the Nursery with skills below their age expectations. They do not make sufficient progress in the Nursery. Some children can name two-dimensional shapes, such as square, triangle and rectangle. However, a significant number do not develop their language skills well enough because they move too quickly from one activity to another. This limits the opportunity for adults to interact with them and for children to talk to one another during extended periods of play, particularly in outside areas. They make better progress in Reception, but do not reach national expectations by the end of the year.
- Pupil performance in the phonics screening check was below national average in 2012. Since then, teachers have developed better subject knowledge in phonics and are now more confident in helping pupils to use this knowledge to sound out new words.
- Older pupils are making better progress in the development of reading skills, with recent reading records showing significant improvement. A scrutiny of books in Key Stage 1 shows good progress in literacy but slower progress in mathematics because insufficient time is allowed for independent thinking and problem solving.
- Pupils who are eligible for pupil premium funding and pupils with special educational needs identified at school action are making progress at a slightly faster rate than other pupils as a result of the extra support they receive, and this is helping them catch up.
- Pupils with English as an additional language (EAL) and those identified as school action plus are not making fast enough progress, particularly in writing and mathematics.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching across the school requires improvement because too many lessons do not have sufficient challenge for pupils to make progress in their learning as quickly as they should.
- Some teachers spend a lot of time directing learning, with children sitting on the carpet, rather than providing engaging and motivating activities for children to develop independent learning skills. This can lead to children losing concentration.
- Teaching in Reception classes is well organised. Children are able to use equipment well to become fully engaged in child-initiated play which is sustained for extended periods of time. Structured learning of this nature was less frequent in the Nursery where children were occasionally observed moving from activity to activity with limited purpose, particularly when using the outside area.
- In Year 2, good teaching encourages pupils to use speaking and listening skills well to cooperate on learning tasks. This enables pupils to build on prior learning, develop new ideas and foster strong relationships with staff.

- Teaching assistants, across the school, support learning well in small group work. They have developed good questioning skills that engage and motivate the pupils.
- When pupils are provided with opportunities to work independently, they make effective use of the resources. For example, pupils in Year 1, given time to work with resources, excitedly realised the pattern in a sequence of numbers.
- In contrast, pupils with English as an additional language do not make as much progress as they should in mathematics because they are not always provided with language resources that would help them to grasp the main objective of the lesson.
- Teaching in the resource provision requires improvement because it is not challenging enough. This is because learning tasks do not always provide enough opportunities for cooperative learning. When allowed to work in this way, pupils with special educational needs make better progress because they support each other and develop the confidence to ask teachers for help.
- Pupil premium funding is used to provide additional language support. The adults working with these pupils provide good interactive sessions that promote good progress. However, some catch-up sessions for more able children with English as an additional language involve too much repetition and this limits their progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Behaviour is typically good. Pupils respond well to praise and rise to meet high expectations of good behaviour. Pupils in Year 2 showed great perseverance and good cooperative attitudes when building up a three-dimensional island in a geography lesson. However, in those lessons where children spend a long time listening to the teacher, their attention begins to wander.
- Playtime and lunchtime behaviour is boisterous and enthusiastic, but very well managed when adults play alongside the pupils to coordinate enjoyable activities. There is plenty of equipment for the pupils to use and they quickly help tidy these away at the end of break times.
- Attendance is below average for similar schools, with a small group of persistent absentees. However, the school and governors are doing as much as they can to address this and attendance improved a little in 2012.
- The breakfast club provides a safe, secure and welcoming environment. For the pupils, it provides them with a positive start to the day. The school has recently started to use this provision to support those pupils whose attendance is not yet good enough.
- Parents are positive about the school and speak with enthusiasm about the wide range of classes provided to support families across the whole community, such as those about healthy eating.
- Issues raised by parents and carers are resolved promptly. School questionnaires and surveys show that parental support for the school is strong. Parents are particularly pleased with the accessibility of staff and the good communication that takes place.
- The school has developed a good system for recording pupil behaviour. Immediate tracking enables the school to identify specific individuals and patterns of behaviour that need to be addressed.
- The pupils know how to behave, including playing safely, and understand the consequences of unacceptable behaviour. The school promotes the Rights Respecting Schools framework and the pupils talked about why it is important to be kind and how this helps them to cooperate with each other.
- The resource provision makes a particularly positive contribution to promoting good social development and behaviour. Pupils feel comfortable to share their worries and concerns with staff and they are well supported.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- School development planning identifies appropriate tasks but does not include challenging targets for all groups of pupils, except for those that need to close the gap on their peers.

- The headteacher and deputy have challenged underperformance rigorously over the last twelve months and, as a result, the proportion of good teaching is increasing, but not at a fast enough rate. Staff are united, loyal and committed to the school and the leadership team.
- The school has recently set more rapid progress targets for more able pupils. However, these have not been in place long enough to have had sufficient impact on raising attainment.
- The school provides advice and support about the teaching of phonics to a local special school, which has been well received. The local authority has supported the school over the last three year as a light touch school.
- Senior leaders do not provide sufficient support for middle leaders, such as teachers in charge of subjects or the Early Years Foundation Stage to develop their roles. At present, middle leaders observe teaching and learning, but do not yet have sufficient confidence to guide teachers towards good and better teaching.
- The curriculum successfully supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils have good opportunities to take responsibility and they show good concern for the needs of others. For example, they support each other in girls' and boys' cricket and help each other in clubs, such as the gardening club.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body includes a wide range of governors who represent the whole school community well. They meet and visit the school regularly but some governors do not have enough understanding of their role. They leave monitoring and evaluation of the school's performance to the school progress advisor and to school leaders. They are not sufficiently aware of how the school is doing compared with similar schools nationally, and are therefore not able to challenge senior and middle leaders about school's performance. Governors are knowledgeable about performance management procedures within the school and have supported the leadership team to tackle underperformance in teaching. The finance committee provides good guidance on budgetary matters. Governors have monitored the use of the pupil premium funding and are aware that the progress of this group of pupils has improved. However, they do not keep a close enough eye on other initiatives. Governors keep themselves updated by attending training provided by the local authority, such as safeguarding. They play an important role in raising attendance through their presence at 'Fast track' attendance meetings.

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	101431
Local authority	Bexley
Inspection number	413373

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	314
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mick Barker
Headteacher	Catrin Cox
Date of previous school inspection	9–10 February 2010
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