

Rudgwick Primary School

Tates Way, Rudgwick, RH12 3HW

Inspection dates 18–19 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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.

- Teachers plan challenging tasks for their pupils. Pupils report that school is fun and that teachers are good at helping them to remember things.
- Pupils try very hard to succeed because teachers encourage their pupils to do well by providing plenty of praise and rewards, and teachers listen to pupils very well.
- Pupils have plenty of opportunities to think about the work, make decisions and discuss their ideas together and this deepens their understanding.
- Pupils behave well because they enjoy coming to school and have a real say in what they would like to be even better.
- Pupils achieve well all through the school; they do particularly well in writing and mathematics.
- Parents and carers were unsettled by the many staff and leadership changes following the previous inspection. The great majority are now very appreciative of the new headteacher's strong sense of ambition for the school and the way she has sought and acted on their views.
- The improvement teams, set up by the headteacher, have already started to improve pupils' achievement.
- Governors' effective oversight of the school, combined with the strong commitment of the teaching staff, has helped to maintain good achievement through a period of much change.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- Although pupils reach above average standards in English, they do not achieve as well in reading as they do in writing because they are not sure what they need to do to improve their skills.
- Most teachers spend a great deal of time writing helpful comments in pupils' books, however pupils do not consistently follow these up so the comments do not always lead to an improvement in their work.
- Teachers share 'steps to success' with pupils in lessons and often ask pupils to decide what these will be, but pupils do not always check that they have followed these steps to help them do the best they could.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 22 lessons, 11 of which were joint observations with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with pupils, three governors, a local authority representative and school staff, including the leader in charge of provision for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, the acting deputy headteacher and staff representing new improvement teams. In addition, some pupils read to the inspectors.
- The inspectors took account of the 56 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection and spoke to some parents and carers before school.
- The inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a number of documents, including the school's own information on pupils' current progress, planning and monitoring documentation, records relating to behaviour and attendance and safeguarding records. Year 6 pupils were not in school during the inspection because they were away on a residential visit; the inspectors reviewed their work in a large sample of English and mathematics books.

Inspection team

Liz Kounnou, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Christine Taylor

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than most primary schools.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is well below average. The pupil premium provides additional funding for looked after children, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and pupils who have a parent or carer in the armed services.
- The proportion of pupils who are of minority ethnic heritage is well below average, and a very few speak English as an additional language. A few pupils are from Traveller families.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action, through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is a little lower than average. This group mainly has specific learning difficulties, behavioural, emotional and social difficulties, speech language or communication needs, or physical disabilities.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the national minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- A new headteacher was appointed in January 2013. There have been four different headteachers since the previous inspection. In addition, almost half the teaching staff were appointed in this academic year.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that more is outstanding by:
 - making sure that pupils respond to the comments that teachers write in their books so that they improve their work at a faster rate
 - making sure that the small steps to success that teachers share with pupils during lessons, set out more precisely how pupils can achieve the learning objectives
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to use the steps to success to check how well they have done.
- Improve achievement in reading, particularly for lower attaining pupils, by:
 - making sure that pupils are fully aware of the steps they must master in order to improve their reading and that they check that they are meeting their targets
 - making sure that the daily guided reading sessions provide activities that will enable all pupils to practise and then master new skills.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils achieve well throughout the school, including the most able. Since the previous inspection, pupils have consistently reached above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Progress is strongest in writing and mathematics.
- Pupils write well because they are motivated by the topics. They have a good grasp of basic skills, such as handwriting and spelling, and make good use of punctuation. Good writing skills begin in the Early Years Foundation Stage where children write imaginatively, for example writing, 'The eye is as big as a teacup' when describing a blue whale.
- Pupils do well in mathematics because they regularly make use of practical equipment so that they are confident in solving problems. There are many opportunities for pupils to talk about mathematics and this really helps them to understand their work. In Year 6 pupils' comments show the teacher how well they have grasped new ideas, such as, after working out four sixths of 36 correctly: 'I thought it was awesome, I was challenged.'
- Pupils thoroughly enjoy reading. A good grasp of how to link letters and sounds (phonics) helps pupils break down unfamiliar words right from the start. Pupils all have bookmarks with reading targets setting out steps to help them improve. However, this system is not fully effective because pupils rarely look at their bookmarks and do not remember their targets, some are not set at the right level, and pupils rarely assess themselves against the targets. Consequently, some who struggle with reading are not catching up.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage do well because they are curious and independent. They concentrate extremely well; several children painted starfish, jellyfish, or just fish, with great care and control including lots of detail and mixing the colours they wanted. Basic literacy and mathematical skills are taught with care so that children do well in these key areas.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs do well, and are beginning to achieve higher standards due to the precisely planned activities. Other groups do equally well, including those from minority ethnic heritage and those from Traveller families. The very few pupils supported by the pupil premium grant do particularly well in mathematics, and are just ahead of other pupils; they do not do quite as well in English and fall behind by about two terms in comparison to others.
- Pupils do well in other subjects, particularly in sport. The gymnastics team came second in a national competition. Pupils' great enjoyment of topic work leads them to do well in a wide range of subjects, including information and communication technology.

The quality of teaching is good

- Pupils really enjoy most lessons and make good progress because teachers provide activities that are interesting, make them think hard and give them plenty of opportunities to be actively involved in their learning.
- Teachers explain things very clearly so that pupils know what they have to do, and regularly check that pupils understand. Some provide one-to-one explanations to get pupils back on track quickly if they start to struggle with the work or if they find it too easy and need a bit more challenge.
- Teachers manage behaviour extremely well, they find every opportunity to praise pupils and value their contributions. Teachers listen to their ideas and often include these in the work. Consequently, pupils want to please their teachers and try very hard to succeed.
- Teachers regularly ask pupils to talk to each other about their work and share or develop ideas together. This deepens understanding and increases confidence. Year 1 pupils learned how to use adverbs in their sentences by acting out the 'doing words' and talking to each other about the different ways they could describe how they were doing it. Their written descriptions included; 'the tiny brown mouse scurries quickly into the gloomy mouse hole.'

- Most teachers mark pupils' books regularly and make careful assessments of how well pupils are doing. Their comments praise success and highlight the most important thing to improve next time. However, this does not always help to move learning on because pupils are not expected to follow up the comments on a regular basis.
- All lessons begin with, or include, a short objective that explains what pupils will learn, usually accompanied by a list of the small steps that pupils need to follow. However, pupils do not always use this information to check for themselves how well they have done. On occasions, the steps to success are muddled and are therefore not fully effective.
- Daily reading sessions are packed with interesting activities, which ensure that pupils working independently are well occupied in purposeful reading while adults focus their skills more precisely with other groups. However, some activities are not designed precisely enough to help pupils practise the skills they need to master to reach the next level in reading, and this slows their progress.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs benefit from precise support and do well. Teaching assistants ask encouraging questions that help pupils work things out. Some pupils work with the special educational needs coordinator in tailored sessions that help them overcome difficulties, such as understanding the place value of digits so that they know which is bigger, 78 or 87.

The behaviour and safety of pupils is good

- Most pupils thoroughly enjoy coming to school because they have a lot of influence over many of the activities. They are proud of their school and contribute actively to the school council, the eco council and the Kenyan council.
- Pupils feel safe and contribute towards the safety of others by posting tips on the Staying Safe board. The current focus is cyber bullying as the school has provided intensive support, in partnership with the community police officer, to help pupils and parents and carers understand the dangers associated with technology. Pupils say there is almost no bullying, and that staff deal with any incidents that do occur very well.
- A very strong community ethos ensures discrimination of any kind is not tolerated. Teachers reward pupils for their actions in helping others as well as for hard work and effort. In lessons, they regularly help one another. In Year 2, pupils are encouraged to show if they fully understand what to do by putting their thumbs up. The teacher then selects one child to be the Green Flag leader in each group with responsibility to explain the details to anyone who does not understand. Pupils almost burst with eagerness to take on this responsibility.
- Good quality artwork contributes to a sense of calm and well-being all around the school. There is often a lively buzz because teachers seek pupils' views in most lessons, but sometimes pupils work with huge concentration. Staff make the reading corners look very welcoming, helping to promote a love of reading right across the school.
- Pupils try hard to do well, particularly in their topic books. In other books, their presentation is not as good because pupils do not always use their handwriting skills as well as in their topic books. On a few occasions, when pupils are expected to organise themselves, a small minority of pupils do not respond well to teachers' trust and behave in a silly manner.
- Attendance is above average, because pupils want to come to school. The special educational needs coordinator has worked in partnership with some parents and carers to improve the attendance of a few pupils who were persistently absent. As a result, in most cases, their attendance has improved substantially.

The leadership and management are good

- The school experienced a period of frequent changes in school leadership following the previous

inspection. Pupils continued to do well, but parents and carers were understandably disconcerted by the changes. The new headteacher has introduced a number of measures to address their concerns, such as improved communication through a regular newsletter. These have been effective. The great majority of parents and carers responding to the online questionnaire, Parent View, indicated that they would recommend the school and inspectors received several letters expressing confidence in the school.

- School leaders foster good relationships by publicising the open door policy. Many community volunteers support the school, in particular with reading. A large group of pupils regularly have the opportunity to practise their skills with 'reading volunteers'.
- Pupils, staff and governors also commented on improvements the headteacher has secured since her appointment. Teams of staff and governors were set up to tackle areas of concern highlighted on the school's development plan. As result, pupils now have targets to help them understand how to improve their reading and writing, and organised daily guided reading sessions to boost their achievement. These initiatives and several others are already beginning to make a difference.
- The special educational needs coordinator reviewed the systems for identifying pupils with needs, and provided very clear guidance for staff to increase the precision of teaching for pupils in this group, both in lessons and in small-group sessions. As a result, their progress is accelerating.
- Systems for monitoring the performance of staff are robust. These are enhanced by rigorous checks on the quality of teaching and regular meetings with teachers to discuss the progress of any pupils who are starting to fall behind. Consequently, school leaders have an accurate view of how well the school is doing and work effectively to improve teaching.
- There have been substantial improvements in the Early Years Foundation Stage learning environment, both outdoors and indoors, since the previous inspection. Children have a wealth of high-quality equipment to use throughout the day.
- The curriculum provides plenty of opportunities for pupils to learn about their own and other cultures. A link with a Kenyan school is firmly established and art, music, sport and drama feature widely all around the school.
- The local authority provides light touch support for this good school, supplemented effectively with clear guidance for governors through the process of appointing a headteacher and through a planned programme of support for the new headteacher.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The diligent oversight of the governing body has helped keep the school on an even keel despite the many changes of leadership. Governors have a secure grasp of how well the school is doing and have ensured clear links between the robust procedures for managing the performance of staff and salary progression. School leaders ensure wise use of the small amount of pupil premium funding to ensure this group are settled and do well. The governing body insists upon systematic checks to ensure that pupils do not fall behind. Governors receive regular reports from school leaders to increase their knowledge of the school's performance data, supplemented by the use of national reports to compare performance with other schools. The opportunity to discuss issues directly with middle leaders, such as the special educational needs coordinator, means that governors have a good understanding of the work of the school.

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	125849
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	411905

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	172
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Mike Chapman
Headteacher	Miss Amie Bowers
Date of previous school inspection	16–17 June 2010
Telephone number	01403 822151
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