

New Road School and Nursery Unit

Bryant Street, Chatham, ME4 5QN

Inspection dates 19–20 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
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:

- Progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 was inadequate in the past. As a result, some pupils have gaps in their knowledge and are still catching up to where they should be.
- There are differences in attainment between groups. For example, pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals do not always achieve as well as others.
- The overall quality of teaching is not consistently good in all classes and in all subjects.
- The quality of marking and feedback is not of a high enough standard.
- Records of incidents affecting pupils' safety are not sufficiently clear or detailed.
- Behaviour is not always good in lessons. Some pupils lose concentration when they are not fully involved in lessons or have work that is not set at the right level for them. This affects their progress.
- School development plans are not sharp enough.
- School leaders have remedied the serious weaknesses in teaching, but have not put tailored support in place to help individual teachers develop their skills even further.

The school has the following strengths:

- Progress across the school is improving, sometimes rapidly. There has been a particularly good improvement in reading.
- Senior leaders are ambitious for the school and are determined to continue the drive for improvement.
- The leadership team works in close partnership with the Interim Executive Board (IEB). All school leaders and managers have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- Pupils enjoy school and attendance is improving.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 20 lessons. About half of these were observed jointly with the headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' work books in lessons and spoke to pupils about their work. They also talked to pupils informally at break time.
- An inspector met with a representative of the IEB and with four members of the new 'shadow' governing body. Inspectors also met with senior school staff, middle leaders and an officer from the local authority.
- There were too few responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, to enable inspectors to see the results. Inspectors considered the school's own survey of parents and carers which was undertaken in May this year.
- Inspectors looked at the school's records of attainment and progress and other documentation such as improvement plans, and minutes of the meetings of the IEB.
- Evidence from Ofsted's previous monitoring visits was also taken into consideration.
- A serious incident that occurred at the school since the previous monitoring inspection has been investigated by the appropriate authorities and is now closed. Ofsted does not have the power to investigate incidents of this kind. The welfare provision in the school was evaluated against the regulations that are in place and inspection judgements are based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection.

Inspection team

Melanie Knowles, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Clive Dunn

Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

Information about this school

- New Road School is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The school serves a diverse community. About half of the pupils come from White British backgrounds. The other half come from a variety of ethnic groups. About a quarter of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported at school action is above average. The proportion of pupils supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium (additional government funding for looked after children, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and pupils with a parent or carer in the armed services) is well above average.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school was deemed to require special measures at its previous section 5 inspection in September 2011. Since that time, one of Her Majesty's Inspectors has carried out four monitoring inspections. There have been considerable staff changes during this period and the leadership team in the school has been completely restructured.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that it is consistently good or better in all subjects, ensuring that:
 - all adults use questioning effectively to extend pupils' thinking
 - teachers have the confidence and subject knowledge to adapt lessons to the needs of all pupils
 - teaching assistants are deployed effectively and promote pupils' independent learning
 - all teachers give guidance to pupils on how they can improve their work and follow up on corrections.
- Raise achievement, particularly in writing and mathematics, by:
 - tackling gaps in pupils' basic understanding of number
 - improving spelling and handwriting
 - ensuring that pupils understand when to use standard English
 - insisting on high standards of presentation in all work.
- Improve the impact of leaders and managers at all levels by :
 - ensuring that all school development plans have measurable short-term and long-term targets
 - using the wide range of information from the checks on the quality of teaching to draw up tailored development plans for each teacher

- checking the impact of all support and intervention programmes to ensure that they provide value for money.

 - Keep clear and accurate records of any incident affecting pupils' safety and ensure that parents and carers are informed in writing of any matter that affects the well-being of their children in a timely manner.
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Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 are rising, but are still not in line with those seen nationally. Work seen in pupils' books confirms the school's view that many pupils in Years 1 and 2 have made rapid progress, but some pupils in Year 2 have not managed to make up the ground lost in previous years.
- Progress across the school is not consistently good across all classes and in all subjects. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 have made slower progress than those in Years 5 and 6 this year. School leaders have also identified that more needs to be done to ensure that pupils develop good skills in using information and communication technology (ICT) and in scientific investigation.
- In some classes in Key Stage 2, pupils are held back by gaps in their basic understanding of number and by poor spelling and handwriting. Some pupils do not understand the difference between spoken and more formal written language and struggle to write in Standard English.
- Until recently, pupils' progress across the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 was inadequate. Teachers now have higher expectations of what young children can achieve, even from low starting points. The proportion of children joining Year 1 with the skills and knowledge appropriate for their age has increased this year.
- Standards in reading are rising. Daily group reading sessions in school, new resources and help from reading volunteers have all had an impact. Many pupils now read regularly at home and this has helped them to increase their fluency and confidence.
- Teachers now ensure that pupils have plenty of opportunities to use their mathematical skills to solve problems and apply their mathematical skills in different subjects such as history and science. Pupils understand the relevance of mathematics to their everyday lives.
- The extra support programmes that are designed to help disabled pupils and those with special educational needs and other pupils who have fallen behind are not always effective in accelerating progress and helping them to catch up. There is more to be done to ensure that these pupils achieve as well as possible.
- The progress of pupils eligible for support from the pupil premium is variable. The school has used the money to provide a wide range of support programmes, but has not reviewed these to see which interventions have helped pupils make accelerated progress. In some classes, gaps are not closing quickly enough. For example, in Year 2, pupils eligible for support from the pupil premium scored 12.8 points in reading this year, but their classmates scored 14.7 points.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching is not consistently good in all classes, but has improved since the previous inspection. Teachers have worked hard to develop their skills and improve their practice, and all respond positively to advice and support.
- Teaching is not good in all subjects. Some teachers lack the in-depth knowledge of a subject that enables them to adapt lessons to meet the needs of all pupils. There are still occasions when some pupils find their work too easy and others struggle, even with support.
- The impact of additional adults such as teaching assistants is variable. Some make an excellent contribution to lessons, but others miss opportunities to ask questions that extend pupils' thinking, particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Sometimes teachers allocate adult help to a group for too long. As a result, some less able pupils find it hard to work independently.
- Although teachers mark pupils' work regularly, they do not always give pupils guidance on what they need to do to improve. Some teachers do not have high enough expectations of how pupils present their work and do not correct basic errors in spelling. Teachers do not ensure that pupils

have the opportunity to respond to feedback or complete corrections properly.

- Teachers try to make learning relevant for pupils and plan topics that make links between subjects. For example, in Year 6, pupils have studied the Tudors and have used ICT to create factsheets about William Shakespeare. They have solved mathematical problems relating to Tudor recipes and created collage portraits of Tudor monarchs in art lessons. Pupils find this way of working interesting and engaging.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- The recent safeguarding incident at the school showed that not all pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. School leaders have taken appropriate actions to reinforce messages about all aspects of personal safety.
- Relationships between adults and pupils are generally very positive. Pupils from different backgrounds get on well together. They have respect for each other and take pride in their school.
- In lessons, the quality of pupils' behaviour is linked closely to the quality of the teaching. Where the teaching is good, pupils are engaged with their learning and work with concentration. Pupils sometimes become disengaged when the teacher talks for too long or when the work set for them is not well matched to their needs. On these occasions, most pupils react quickly to reminders from their teacher, but valuable learning time is sometimes lost.
- Most pupils have positive attitudes to learning, but many do not have effective self-help strategies to work independently and overcome minor difficulties.
- Pupils say that bullying of any kind is not a problem and they are confident that any incidents will be dealt with quickly by adults.
- Pupils who find it difficult to manage their behaviour and are at risk of exclusion are well supported by the school's behaviour mentor and skilled support assistants. This has enabled these pupils to stay in school and continue their learning.
- Attendance has improved this year and is in line with that seen nationally. The headteacher has correctly identified that some pupils who are underachieving also have a poor record of attendance. The family liaison officer is working closely with these families to ensure that pupils come to school regularly and on time.

The leadership and management

require improvement

- The school fulfils its statutory duty regarding safe practice in recruitment of staff and ensures that there are appropriate procedures for protecting children from maltreatment. The recent incident at the school revealed weaknesses in checks made on pupils returning to the classroom after break time and issues with the security of the school site. Actions have been taken to ensure that this will not happen again. School leaders acknowledge that they could have provided clearer information to the parents and carers of the pupils involved.
- The headteacher now has a strong leadership team to support her. The deputy headteacher has developed her skills quickly and the three teachers who lead the Early Years Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 are able to help the headteacher drive improvement across the school. They all provide good models of practice to colleagues.
- School leaders have tackled the serious weaknesses in teaching and the systems for checking on the quality of teaching are robust. However, senior leaders have not made best use of the wide range of information they gather from visits to lessons, checks on pupils' work and teachers' planning to draw up individual development plans and help teachers improve their practice to

become good and outstanding.

- At present, school leaders and managers do not know how effective support programmes are in accelerating pupils' progress. Work has started to remedy this situation. The deputy headteacher has begun to check the impact of additional support for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. School leaders are committed to providing equal opportunities for all pupils to thrive and are improving the school's electronic tracking system so that the progress of different groups can be checked regularly.
 - The school's plans for improvement are not sharp enough. The lack of measurable short-term and long-term targets makes it difficult for school leaders and members of the IEB to judge how well the school is doing in raising standards for pupils.
 - Pupils study a good range of different subjects and thoroughly enjoy the regular trips out that are planned for them. Many take part in the varied clubs and after-school activities on offer. The curriculum promotes pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development adequately.
 - Relationships with parents and carers are generally positive. The school's strong pastoral support team works closely with families whose circumstances make them vulnerable and ensures that they receive advice and help.
 - Procedures to appraise teachers' performance are rigorous. The headteacher sets appropriate targets for improvement and reviews progress regularly. She ensures that teachers' pay progression is linked to the quality of their teaching and the progress their pupils make.
 - Well-targeted support from the local authority has helped the school to improve. For example, visits from advisers have helped teachers in the Nursery and Reception classes to develop their skills in judging children's progress.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - The IEB is knowledgeable and well informed. Members understand the detailed information about pupils' progress provided by the headteacher. Minutes of meetings show that the board acknowledges and celebrates successes while maintaining its challenge to secure further improvements in standards. Members of the board have a good understanding of the quality of teaching, but do not know how the performance of teachers relates to salary progression. Because support programmes do not always have measurable targets, it is difficult for the IEB to be sure that the pupil premium funding has been used effectively.
 - Arrangements for the transition to a normal governing body are being managed carefully. Members of the IEB are supporting the four newly recruited governors to build their knowledge and skills quickly and securely.
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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

Unique reference number	118320
Local authority	Medway
Inspection number	420402

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	370
Appropriate authority	Interim Executive Board
Chair	Vincent O'Mara
Headteacher	Elizabeth Caldwell
Date of previous school inspection	14–15 September 2011
Telephone number	01634 843084
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