

Westdene Primary School

Bankside, Westdene, Brighton, BN1 5GN

Inspection dates

27–28 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Teaching is almost always good, and sometimes outstanding, because teachers use their good subject knowledge to engage pupils in an exciting curriculum.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding, both in lessons and around the school. Pupils are particularly good at working together, discussing their ideas and collaborating effectively in small groups.
- Children make a good start to school in the Early Years Foundation Stage and are prepared well for Key Stage 1 work. Pupils continue to make good progress and achieve above the national attainment levels by the end of Year 2.
- Pupils' good achievement through the school is seen in above-average attainment at the end of Key Stage 2.
- Senior leaders have encouraged teachers to take responsibility for their areas of leadership and, therefore, teachers are ambitious and forward thinking. The school uses the opportunities available as a teaching school effectively for staff to develop their skills and expertise.
- Senior leaders responded to the dip in achievement in mathematics by driving forward a focus on mental mathematics and building further links with secondary schools.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is not enough outstanding teaching for pupils to make consistently good progress and achieve above-average levels in all areas.
- Teachers occasionally take too long explaining what pupils need to do so that they do not have enough time to consolidate their learning by doing things for themselves.
- The school is not analysing its performance data at class and group level to identify any groups of pupils who may not be making sufficient progress.
- Although marking is regular throughout the school, teachers do not always give pupils enough opportunities to respond to the advice given, to help them to improve their work quickly.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 21 lessons taught by 18 teachers, including observations completed jointly with senior leaders. There were a number of short visits to both lessons and small-group sessions supporting pupils with special educational needs. They attended an assembly and the breakfast and after-school club.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, subject coordinators, staff, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors talked to pupils informally during their free time, and observed them at play and during lunchtimes. They listened to them read and met with them in small groups.
- The inspection team observed the school's work, looked at the work in pupils' books and the information the school has on the progress all pupils are making. The inspection team looked at the school's self-evaluation and development plan, documentation on teachers' performance management, school policies and records relating to behaviour, safety and attendance. The school's safeguarding procedures were also evaluated.
- The views of parents and carers were taken account of through the 95 responses to the online parent questionnaire (Parent View), together with information from the school's own recent parent survey. Inspectors considered 36 replies to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Christine Dickens, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Helen Hutchings

Additional Inspector

Roger Fenwick

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Westdene Primary School is larger than an average-sized primary school and is expanding.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage includes a Nursery and four Reception classes. Key Stage 1 is currently three forms of entry and Key Stage 2 is two forms of entry. The school received an extension to the site approximately three years ago.
- The majority of pupils are White British. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, those looked after by the local authority and those with a parent in the armed forces, is below average. Currently, the school has no pupils with a parent in the armed forces.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs supported at school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The school is a national teaching school working with 17 school partners to provide professional development opportunities, research and development, leadership development and succession planning and school to school support
- The school exceeds the current government floor standards, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school manages provision for a breakfast club and an after-school club.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the amount of outstanding teaching so that pupils accelerate their progress, by:
 - allowing pupils time to respond to teachers' comments in their marking to make more immediate progress towards their targets
 - increasing the pace of some lessons by making sure that pupils do not spend too long listening to the teacher and have more time to do things for themselves.
- Analyse pupils' attainment and progress data so that leaders and teachers have a stronger understanding about strengths and areas for development, by:
 - analysing data by class, gender and groups to inform the governing body and teachers of the progress being made by all different groups
 - regularly measuring the progress of pupils who are given additional help by specialist staff, to gain a clear view of which activities and programmes have the greatest impact on pupils' progress.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Most children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and abilities that are typical of, or above, the expectations for their age group, and they progress well. Their progress continues to be good throughout Key Stage 1, by the end of which attainment is above the national average in all areas.
- Results in the national screening check in phonics (linking letters to the sounds they make) at the end of Year 1 were below national expectations last year but, due to changes made to teaching this year, a majority of pupils are now meeting national expectations.
- Until last year, pupils' attainment in English and mathematics in the Key Stage 2 tests has been above national averages. However, this declined to average in 2012, largely because of the complex needs of a number of pupils in the cohort, and because some pupils had not made the same rates of progress as had been the case previously. Early indications from the most recent national tests show an improvement to the previously higher levels of attainment.
- For the last two years pupils' progress through Key Stage 2 has been stronger in English than in mathematics. Although there have been inconsistencies in pupils' progress in mathematics, and last year pupils did not make enough progress, inspection evidence shows that the steps taken by the school have accelerated progress in this subject across the school and it is now good. In particular, more pupils in Year 6 are working at the highest levels in mathematics.
- Evidence of the work in pupils' books shows that pupils are making good progress in reading and writing, addressing the slight dip in progress last year.
- Pupils across the school do well in reading. Reading partnerships at home are promoted well. Pupils are confident when reading and use a range of strategies to break down new words.
- Standards in speaking and listening are very high. Pupils have opportunities to work with a range of partners and speak confidently with their peers and when talking to adults.
- This is an inclusive school where disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are encouraged and helped to make good progress alongside their peers. Effective support is provided both in the classroom and in small intervention groups outside the classroom. Pupils who speak English as an additional language achieve at least in line with all pupils, and often better than all pupils.
- The attainment of pupils who are eligible for support through the pupil premium is in line with that of other pupils in both English and mathematics.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Good and sometimes outstanding teaching helps pupils to achieve well, including those who need additional help. Teachers are enthusiastic and have excellent relationships with pupils; they make sure that pupils experience learning that is fun.
- Teachers across the school use advanced technology to engage pupils. One Year 6 lesson observed where pupils were using tablet computer technology linking the learning across two classes. Learning was being pushed to a very high level across literacy and personal, social and health education using drama, technology and peer assessment. Teachers across two classes had planned a highly effective lesson that began with clear success criteria being shared with pupils, drama techniques engaging all pupils and a competitive element being built in to 'beat the teacher'.
- Teachers have excellent subject knowledge, and this enables them to challenge and stretch pupils' learning. They encourage an investigative approach, especially in mathematics. This approach links well with other subjects and makes learning exciting, for example through work linked to a local area of natural beauty that engaged and enthused a Year 4 class to develop their mathematics skills by using ratio and proportion.
- Teaching is consistently enthusiastic, interesting and interactive, which makes good use of

pupils' own knowledge and understanding. Stimulating resources are used effectively and, as a result, pupils concentrate and are eager to learn.

- When teaching is outstanding, there is a good pace, with a sense of urgency about the learning. However, there are a few lessons where teachers spend too much time talking and explaining, and pupils spend too little time carrying out tasks independently.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is effective. The Nursery offers a range of learning opportunities through play with a small amount of direct teaching and a well-used outside area where children believe they 'play and don't do learning'. In Reception, children learn effectively across all the areas of learning, although some classrooms tend to be a little too busy with fewer opportunities for children to choose activities for themselves.
- Teachers work well as a team to plan stimulating lessons, for example in organising mental mathematics in ability groups in Year 6. The teachers have developed good relationships with their groups of pupils, challenging them in a supportive way which leads to good progress being made.
- The teaching of specialist subjects is a strength of the school. Specialist teachers in music and French have good subject knowledge. Music specialists use their skills to motivate pupils so that they play a wide range of musical instruments and have opportunities to sing in several choirs.
- Teaching assistants who focus on helping disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, and more generally in the classroom, are well informed and knowledgeable because of the good training and support they have been given. They balance the support they give carefully with encouragement for pupils to develop the ability to work on their own.
- Marking is consistent across the school, with all teachers using 'green pen' marking with a positive comment and a target. However, pupils sometimes do not have an opportunity to respond to the comments made in the marking, for example when asked to practise a particular spelling or to redraft or edit their work to move forward with their target immediately.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding and their conduct around the school, at lunch and break times, is excellent.
- Pupils have very good attitudes to their learning. They are keen and diligent, even in the few lessons where teaching was less effective and pupils had to listen for a long time.
- Incident logs show very low numbers of occasions where pupils misbehave. The system of rewarding pupils with certificates and prizes motivates them very well. Pupils show highly respectful attitudes towards each other, their teachers, other adults and visitors to the school.
- The school has employed a good range of techniques, including the use of local police officers in activities such as role play to ensure that pupils know how to keep themselves safe. Pupils are aware of the dangers of inappropriate use of the internet because this is taught effectively.
- Pupils are fully agreed that they feel very safe and know who to turn to for advice. The Parent View online survey shows that most parents and carers consider that pupils behave well.
- In a lesson where Year 6 pupils were discussing their concerns about moving on to secondary school, they showed that they are confident to share misgivings with their peers.
- Attendance has been good over time but, although remaining above average, shows a slight fall this year.
- Pupils say that bullying is very rare and they know that, should an incident occur, it is taken seriously and dealt with effectively by the school. Incidents of racist comments are low but, when they happen, are dealt with immediately, making it clear that such behaviour is unacceptable.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher is passionate about learning, and has a strong vision for the school and the

development of teachers. Senior leaders accurately identify and promote the projects that have been introduced to develop the skills and aspirations in the pupils.

- Senior leaders are committed to the professional development of staff, and effective training supports and extends teachers' skills. As a teaching school, teachers have opportunities to attend and run training for their colleagues within and from other schools. Middle-level leaders show drive and ambition, and have opportunities to develop their own skills as well as their subjects. They have a clear understanding of what needs to be done and have a drive to improve their practice.
- Performance management is well developed and rigorous, with challenging targets set for pupils' progress. Strong links are made to individual training needs and to pay progression. The key focus on improving mathematics, identified as a relative weakness in the school, has been effective.
- The school development plan has a number of suitable actions and strategies. However, this is not specifically targeted at what will be done for different groups of pupils, as data are not specifically analysed around the achievement of groups.
- Pupil premium funding is accurately targeted at providing additional support for eligible pupils. However, this support is not rigorously analysed for its impact.
- Staff know exactly what is expected of them and what the school is striving to achieve. They feel valued and very much part of the team that shares the same vision for high levels of attainment and progress. They value the open-door policy that starts at the top of the school, but is also evident between peers, so that they know they can ask anyone for support. The staff questionnaire shows that morale is high.
- The school's curriculum gives pupils a rich range of additional activities which contribute strongly to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, the Olympic values are used to develop pupils' understanding of right and wrong. The breakfast and after-school clubs contribute well to developing the social skills of those who attend. No pupil is discriminated against.
- The local authority has provided light-touch support for this school that has helped the school to challenge itself.
- Safeguarding procedures meet statutory requirements and are effective.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is well organised and provides strong support and challenge for the leadership team. The governors are constantly reviewing the way they carry out visits to the school to make sure they have a clear understanding of how it is performing. They have rigorous monitoring procedures in place, receiving reports from pupils' progress meetings and national test results, which they then cross-reference with other national data so that they understand how the school is performing in relation to schools nationally. Governors monitor the way the pupil premium money is spent, making sure this is targeted at supporting the most disadvantaged pupils. Governors regularly attend training courses and are fully informed about teachers' performance and pay. They are aware of the quality of teaching and how this is being improved, and regularly join the senior leadership team on lesson observations.

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	114380
Local authority	Brighton and Hove
Inspection number	412420

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	578
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Fred Pearce
Headteacher	Debbie Crossingham
Date of previous school inspection	3 October 2007
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