

West Kingsdown Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Fawkham Road, West Kingsdown, Sevenoaks, TN15 6JP

Inspection dates 13–14 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching		Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Inadequate	4

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires special measures.

- Achievement is inadequate because pupils do not make enough progress across the school in English and mathematics. Too few pupils reach the standards expected for their age by the time they leave school, particularly in writing and mathematics.
- Teaching is inadequate overall. Teachers' expectations are too low and the pace of learning too slow. Sometimes teachers confuse what they want pupils to do with what they want pupils to learn.
- Work is not consistently pitched at the right level for pupils of all abilities and not enough demands are made on more-able pupils to enable them to learn at a faster pace.
- Teachers' marking does not always show pupils how they can improve their work.
- Despite some recent improvements, attendance is below average.
- There has not been enough time for the work of the new headteacher to have had an impact on achievement and teaching.
- The school is currently dependent on external support as the senior leadership structure is incomplete and this restricts the capacity to improve.
- Teachers have not been set clear targets for their performance, which are linked to the progress pupils make.
- The school improvement plan is not focused on improving pupils' achievement.
- The governing body does not hold the school's leaders to account effectively enough for its performance.

The school has the following strengths:

- The new headteacher has, in a very short time, made some marked changes that have significantly improved pupils' behaviour.
- Pupils enjoy school and feel safe. They want to do well and they usually behave well.
- Parents and carers have confidence in the headteacher and are positive about the school.
- Teachers and other staff provide good care for the pupils and there are good relationships between teachers and pupils.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 17 lessons or part lessons, six of which were joint observations with the headteacher or supporting deputy headteacher. In addition, inspectors talked to pupils about their work and listened to some pupils read.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, other staff with leadership responsibilities, groups of pupils, governors and representatives of the local authority.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation, the school improvement plan, records of pupils' progress, monitoring information and the safeguarding procedures.
- Inspectors took account of 27 responses to the online Parent View survey and spoke to some parents and carers at the start of the school day. Inspectors also took account of 11 questionnaires returned by staff.

Inspection team

Margaret Coussins, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Clifford Walker

Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

Newly qualified teachers should not be appointed.

Information about this school

- West Kingsdown is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is below average. The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The next largest group of pupils is of Romany or Gypsy heritage. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is below average as is the proportion supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives additional funding (the pupil premium), because they are known to be eligible for free school meals, are in the care of the local authority or are children of service families, is below average. At West Kingsdown, most pupils eligible for the pupil premium are those entitled to free school meals.
- The school meets the current government floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The school makes provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage in a Reception class.
- The headteacher started at the school in April 2013.
- The school is supported for two days a week by the deputy headteacher from a local primary school. The local authority funds this support.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is at least consistently good by:
 - providing teachers with training to improve their skills in teaching writing and mathematics
 - ensuring teachers have high expectations for the standard of pupils' work and the progress they make
 - ensuring that activities enable pupils to be active learners and learn at a fast enough pace so all remain engaged and attentive in lessons
 - making sure that pupils are clear about what they are learning in lessons
 - using accurate assessment information to plan work that is at the right level for pupils of differing abilities and, in particular, is demanding enough for more-able pupils
 - ensuring that marking informs pupils about how to improve their work.
- Ensure that pupils make at least good progress in English, particularly writing, and mathematics in order to raise their attainment by:
 - ensuring that pupils' attainment is assessed accurately and regularly
 - making regular and detailed checks on the progress of individuals and groups so that support can be put in place quickly to prevent underachievement
 - developing whole-school strategies to help pupils improve their writing skills as they move up

the school

- increasing pupils' understanding of mathematical ideas and their ability to apply their mathematical knowledge and skills to solve problems
- ensuring that pupils have frequent opportunities to develop their basic skills in literacy, numeracy and communication across a range of subjects.

■ Improve behaviour and safety by:

- ensuring that pupils are always fully engaged in lessons and their behaviour does not slip
- increasing pupils' awareness of safety when using the internet
- building on the good relationships with parents and carers to ensure that attendance rises.

■ Increase the capacity of leadership and management in order to improve effectiveness at all levels and drive rapid improvement by ensuring that:

- the school has a fully-functioning senior leadership team and that leaders become less dependent on outside support
- middle managers are fully involved in monitoring teaching and achievement in their areas
- improvement plans focus on the urgent need to improve teaching and pupils' progress, and include measurable targets closely linked to the quality of teaching and outcomes for pupils
- all staff have clear performance targets linked to pupils' progress and the quality of their teaching
- the governing body holds the school to account for its performance and strengthens its monitoring role.

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

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is inadequate

- For the last two years, pupils' progress in English and mathematics from Year 2 to Year 6 has been amongst the slowest in the country. Too many pupils make slow progress in lessons because teachers' expectations for the standard of pupils' work and the progress they make are too low. Pupils' progress varies widely between year groups and across subjects. Progress in writing and mathematics is slower than it is in reading.
- All groups of pupils are underachieving, including those supported by the pupil premium, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. Pupils of Romany or Gypsy heritage, the small numbers of pupils from minority ethnic groups and the few who speak English as an additional language all make similar slow progress to others. Until very recently, checks were not made often enough on the progress of individuals and groups to allow support to be put in place quickly to prevent underachievement.
- Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 have declined over the past three years. In 2012, the proportion reaching the expected level for the end of Year 6 was below average in mathematics and well below average in writing. A lower-than-average proportion reached the higher Level 5 in reading, writing or mathematics. However, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level in reading by the end of Year 6 in 2012 was similar to that found nationally.
- Children start at school in the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and knowledge that are typically below the expected levels for their age and generally make the expected progress in the Reception class.
- The majority of pupils have a confident knowledge of phonics (linking sounds and letters) to help them read unfamiliar words by the end of Year 1, but last year this was not built upon well enough in Year 2, and few pupils reached the higher levels in reading. In 2012, standards at the end of Key Stage 1 were below average in reading, writing and mathematics. In previous years they had usually been above average.
- The achievement of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium is inadequate. From year to year there are very few pupils eligible to benefit from the additional funding. In the 2012 Year 6 tests when four pupils were known to be entitled to free school meals, their attainment in English was over a year behind that of other Year 6 pupils and over two years behind in mathematics. However, the gap between pupils who are currently eligible in all year groups and others in the school is beginning to narrow as the headteacher is now tracking their progress and ensuring that they receive additional support where necessary.

The quality of teaching

is inadequate

- Inadequate teaching over time has resulted in slow progress and has left current pupils well behind in their attainment. There is not enough good teaching to accelerate pupils' learning so they can catch up the lost ground.
- Teachers do not always provide enough activities that fully engage pupils or encourage them to be active in their learning. The pace of learning is often too slow, particularly when pupils have to sit for too long in the introduction to a lesson listening to the teacher before starting their independent work.
- Lessons on writing do not provide pupils with enough strategies for making their writing better. Mathematics lessons do not develop pupils' understanding well enough. Teachers are too reliant on worksheets containing routine questions, and place too little emphasis on using and applying mathematics to solve problems.
- Assessment information is not used effectively to plan work that meets the needs of pupils of all abilities. This is particularly true in the case of more-able pupils, who are not challenged enough to reach the highest standards. The accuracy of some previous assessments is doubtful because there is little evidence of quality assurance or moderation with other schools.

- Pupils could often describe to inspectors what they were doing in lessons, but could not explain what they were learning. This is because teachers do not always make it clear to pupils what they are expected to learn.
- Work is usually marked regularly but teachers' comments do not always explain to pupils how to improve their work. However, there are some good examples of marking that provides pupils with useful pointers.
- Relationships between adults and pupils are positive and, as a result, pupils have good attitudes to learning and want to do well. When teaching is at its best, teachers ask good questions to help develop pupils' understanding and move learning forward rapidly. This was seen to good effect in Year 2 and Year 4 English lessons where pupils made good progress in developing writing skills.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, activities are planned that motivate and engage pupils well. For example, children thoroughly enjoyed creating their large farm map. Children are not always encouraged to develop independence, however, and sometimes adults do things for them that they could do very well for themselves.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

require improvement

- Behaviour and safety require improvement because in a few lessons, pupils become restless and inattentive if they are not fully engaged in learning.
- There has, however, been rapid improvement in previously unacceptable and inadequate behaviour by some pupils. On her appointment, the new headteacher quickly established a behaviour policy and, though only in place a few weeks, it has successfully reduced the number of incidents of unacceptable behaviour.
- Pupils mostly behave well in lessons and in the playground. They are friendly and confident and said they enjoyed talking to the inspectors. Most parents and carers agree that their children feel safe in school, are well looked after and that the school makes sure children are well behaved. Some staff are not confident that behaviour is good but acknowledge that it has improved; as one member of staff wrote, 'Since April the behaviour management has developed and is now consistent, firm but fair.'
- In discussions, pupils said they feel safe and secure in school. They say there is a little bullying but that they are confident to talk to staff and that any incidents will be dealt with firmly and fairly. They understand the different forms of bullying including name calling, physical bullying, cyber-based and prejudiced-based bullying. They have a reasonable awareness of how to stay safe in a range of situations but are less aware of staying safe when using the internet.
- Attendance remains below average but has started to improve as a result of the new headteacher's robust systems for challenging absence and working with parents and carers to raise awareness of the importance of regular attendance.

The leadership and management

are inadequate

- Since the previous inspection, the performance of the school has declined considerably. There is an incomplete senior leadership team and the new headteacher is being supported by a deputy headteacher from a local school for two days a week. This lack of an effective leadership structure is holding the school back from improving at a fast enough rate.
- The role of middle managers has not in the past focused sharply enough on improving achievement or teaching. A range of training to support teachers' professional development has very recently been introduced.
- The management of the performance of teachers has not been robust. Teachers' pay progression has not been clearly linked in the past to teachers' performance, or even whether targets have been set for teachers that hold them to account for the progress their pupils make.
- Information about pupils' progress has not been used well enough to check on the achievement

of different groups or to highlight weaknesses in teaching. The differences in pupils' achievement show that the school's efforts to promote equality of opportunity are too limited.

- The new headteacher has a clear understanding of what needs to be done to improve the school's performance and is determined to do it. She has already made changes, most notably in beginning to improve behaviour, but there has not been enough time to demonstrate significant improvement in pupils' achievement or the quality of teaching.
- The new headteacher has made a positive start in motivating staff and injecting an energy and enthusiasm to the team which welcomes renewed direction and wants to improve. She has quickly secured the confidence of parents and carers who are mostly very positive about the school. They appreciate the headteacher's presence in the mornings and her availability, communication and responsiveness.
- A school improvement plan is in place, which the new headteacher has correctly identified as in need of amendment. This is because it does not focus sharply on the correct priorities and the impact of actions, and ways of measuring success are not linked to improvement in pupils' achievement or the quality of teaching.
- The local authority has been working with the school for some time and has increased its support over the past year. It is funding the supporting role of the external deputy headteacher who is working with the new headteacher to improve teaching and learning and the impact of the work of middle managers. However, because of continuing staff changes and lack of leadership structure, the drive to secure improvement relies heavily on the headteacher and this external support, and limits the school's capacity to improve.
- The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities including visits, visitors and varied clubs. Music has a high profile in the school; for example, all pupils in Year 5 learn to play the clarinet. However, the curriculum overall is not fit-for-purpose because it fails to meet the needs of all learners. Curriculum planning does not indicate how literacy, numeracy and communication skills will be used or taught across a range of subjects.
- Safeguarding meets current requirements. Procedures are well known and implemented by all staff to ensure that pupils are safe.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body does not have a clear enough understanding of the performance of the school, in particular pupils' achievement, the quality of teaching, rewards for good teaching and the impact of measures to improve teachers' performance. It has not challenged the school sufficiently over the past two years about the decline in achievement. Governors welcome the improvements that have taken place from the time of the appointment of the new headteacher and feel that now they are being well informed and so more able to question and challenge. They, too, are enthused by her drive and ambition and are willing to increase their effectiveness in holding the school to account for its performance. Individual governors' skills and expertise are valued. Governors have undertaken training in safeguarding and on their roles and responsibilities. All new governors are expected to attend induction training. The governing body has learned recently from the headteacher about how the school spends the pupil premium funding, for example, in providing additional support from teaching assistants. Governors do not, however, monitor the impact of the pupil premium or other aspects of the school's work closely enough. They ensure that safeguarding procedures meet requirements.

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	130948
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	411920

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	152
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Pat Bosley
Headteacher	Sonia Phillips
Date of previous school inspection	18–19 March 2010
Telephone number	01474 853484
Fax number	01474 853114
Email address	headteacher@west-kingsdown.kent.sch.uk

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