

Ditchling (St Margaret's) CofE Primary School

Lewes Road, Ditchling, East Sussex, BN6 8TU

Inspection dates 3–4 July 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	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.

- Pupils make good progress across the school and reach standards which are above average. Progress in reading is outstanding. Pupils' achievement is good.
- Teaching has improved since the last inspection and is now consistently good, and occasionally outstanding.
- Teachers use the information they have about how well pupils are doing to plan work which helps them learn well.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress because they are well supported, according to their particular needs.
- Pupils are well behaved around school and their positive attitudes mean they are keen to succeed in the work planned for them.
- The caring adults and strong emphasis on the school values mean that pupils feel very safe and respected. They reflect this themselves, helping to care for others.
- Senior leaders work together to make sure teachers know how well they are doing, and how they can improve their teaching, and that this is effective in raising standards.
- Governors maintain an accurate view about the work of the school, both through the information provided and their own visits. They ensure all statutory requirements are met, particularly around keeping pupils safe.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils do not make as rapid progress in writing as they do in reading and not as many reach the highest standards.
- The teaching of writing is not yet as systematic as the teaching of reading or mathematics. Writing tasks are occasionally too theoretical.
- Pupils do not get enough opportunities or encouragement to respond to the comments teachers make in their books.
- There is not yet enough teaching which is outstanding, and some teachers do not adapt their lessons in response to how well pupils are doing. Occasionally, teachers talk for too long.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed 12 lessons taught by seven teachers. About half of these observations were undertaken together with senior leaders. Sessions with small groups of pupils, led by teaching assistants, were also observed.
- Senior leaders had meetings with the inspector to discuss their evaluation of the performance of the school, the data about pupils' progress and standards of attainment, and their views about the quality of teaching.
- The inspector reviewed the school's documents, including those about keeping pupils safe, and records and policies about behaviour. The inspector considered the school's plans showing how the issues that senior leaders have identified, or that were identified at the last inspection, have been addressed.
- The work pupils have done during the year was reviewed through their books, and compared to the progress they were making during lessons observed. Pupils' views about their work were also considered.
- The inspector reviewed the 52 responses to the on-line survey for Ofsted, Parent View, as well as correspondence received during the inspection. He also spoke informally to several parents during the course of the inspection. The staff were able to convey their views about the school through discussions and through their responses to a questionnaire.
- At the time of the inspection, most of the Year 6 pupils were away, visiting the secondary school they will be moving to in September, for one of the days, and at a church service for those moving from primary to secondary school for the second afternoon. Year 1 and 2 pupils were undertaking a road safety course at various times during the two days of the inspection.

Inspection team

Andrew Saunders, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller-than-average-size primary school. There are mixed-age classes for most year groups; currently, Year 3 pupils are taught in a single class.
- Almost all pupils are White British.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is below average. The proportions of pupils supported at school action, or at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs are below average.
- There are very few pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium. The pupil premium is funding given to schools by the government to improve the performance of pupils who have been eligible for free school meals, children looked after by the local authority and children of parents in the services.
- There is a breakfast club run by the school.
- The school exceeded the floor standards in 2012, the minimum expectations for the attainment and progress of pupils in English and mathematics, set by the government.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate the progress pupils make in writing, and increase the proportion of pupils reaching the highest standards, to match that in reading, by:
 - giving pupils more opportunities to respond to specific, high quality comments about their writing in all subjects
 - developing a more systematic approach to teaching writing across the school
 - giving pupils more opportunities to write within real-life contexts.
- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching, by making sure all teachers:
 - give pupils more time to do their work, allowing them to get on with the tasks prepared for them as soon as they understand what they need to do
 - check more frequently how well pupils are learning, and adapt the lesson and the teachers' explanations in the light of this.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- When children join the school in Reception, they usually have skills and knowledge which are slightly below those typical for their age. The outstanding teaching, excellent resources and high expectations mean they make a rapid start and develop great curiosity and determination as learners.
- From their starting points, pupils make good progress in English and mathematics. Their progress in reading is outstanding. Over the past two years, the standards of attainment they reach have been rising and are above average. Far more pupils than average reach the higher levels at the end of Year 6 in reading and mathematics.
- While most pupils make good progress in writing, not as many pupils reach the higher levels because they do not always get the chances they need to write for realistic purposes, or to improve their work. Occasionally, the most able pupils do not get enough time to do their work because they are required to sit through explanations that they do not need.
- Pupils are helped to develop great confidence in their reading and enjoy a wide range of different types of books. Progress in mathematics is also good because the school has carefully considered how particular skills are taught and made sure that teachers are confident with this.
- Lesson observations, the school's records of senior leaders' checks about the quality of teaching, and the quality of work pupils have done in their books all show that good progress is typical.
- Although there are very few disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, they receive well-focused support for their particular needs and make good progress. Like other pupils, their progress and confidence in reading are particularly impressive.
- The very few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds also make good progress.
- The very few pupils who are eligible for support through the pupil premium are helped to make better progress than average because they get support from well-trained teachers and teaching assistants. In some cases, attending the breakfast club has also helped them to accelerate their progress. In 2012, there were no eligible pupils in Year 6.
- Most parents agreed with the pupils' views, that pupils make good progress. A small minority did not agree, but the evidence inspectors found showed that progress is typically good.

The quality of teaching is good

- Records about checking the quality of teaching, as well as the observations during the inspection and the work in pupils' books, all show that teaching is almost always good. Since the last inspection, senior leaders, backed by governors, have challenged any weaker teaching and made sure that it improves.
- While there is some outstanding teaching, particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage, this is not yet widespread enough to agree that teaching is outstanding overall. Occasionally, teachers spend too long explaining what pupils need to do and this limits the amount of time they have to do their work.
- Teachers use probing questions to check how well pupils have understood the concepts and skills that have been covered. However, they do not always adapt their lessons in the light of this.
- Technology is used well to provide engaging resources and enrich the topics pupils are studying. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 listened to an on-line example of a radio broadcast, to identify key features of different media, and made good progress in developing their own ideas.
- Teachers make sure that pupils' work is marked regularly. In the best lessons, pupils reflect about their work as soon as they have done it, and think about what they need to do next. However, this is not always the case and pupils do not get enough opportunities to do so, or to respond to the written comments teachers have made about their work. At times, the comments

teachers write in their books are general, and are not sufficiently focused on the specific skills pupils need to develop most.

- There is a well-developed approach to teaching the sounds that letters make (phonics), particularly for younger pupils. This means they make rapid progress, which continues as they get older because reading is highly valued and pupils have plenty of different types of books to choose from.
- Teaching of writing has not yet been as well developed. Teachers plan carefully the topics around which they develop their lessons and give pupils good opportunities to practise different styles of writing. However, the progression of skills in writing across the school has not been as carefully planned, particularly for the most able pupils, so they do not have enough opportunities to write at the higher levels at a young enough age.
- Teaching assistants make a good contribution to the learning of pupils. Where they support disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, they make sure that these pupils work independently as much as possible. They are also an effective part of the team in delivering the high quality of teaching about reading.
- Most parents had very positive views about the quality of teaching, and some said that they feel the teachers are always available if they have any concerns. A small minority did not agree that teaching was good. The inspector found that evidence supported the view that teaching over time is good.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils are very positive about their experience of school. They feel the teachers do a great deal to make their learning interesting, and help them to do well. As a group of pupils said, 'This is a fantastic school; the teachers are nice and make our learning fun.'
- They like being at school and their attendance is above average. A very few pupils whose attendance has slipped are encouraged to make use of the breakfast club and this has improved their attendance and increased the progress in their learning.
- In lessons, pupils enjoy the work teachers give them to do and work hard to do their best. In the best lessons, pupils choose whether they do the 'practice', 'challenge', or 'super challenge' tasks. However, pupils occasionally rely too much on the teachers to tell them whether they are on the right track.
- Pupils are also very keen to continue their work at home, or to work on the projects some classes get, which are completed over a longer period.
- Pupils feel very well cared for. They reflect the respect that adults show each other, and are very polite and courteous around the school.
- Pupils know a lot about different forms of bullying, because these are discussed regularly and sensitively. Consequently, they feel confident that, in the unlikely event that any bullying did occur at their school, they would know how to deal with it. For example, Years 5 and 6 pupils were well informed about cyber bullying, which was reinforced by their work in an English lesson.
- There are good opportunities for pupils to take on responsibilities, as 'buddies' for the younger pupils, on the school council, or running highly popular clubs at lunch times. They thrive on these opportunities and have a very good grasp of how they can contribute towards making the school community a positive place to be.
- The very few disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are fully involved in all aspects of the school. Other pupils make sure they are included in games or clubs at lunch times. All pupils made it clear that any discrimination or racism would be completely unacceptable, and would be dealt with very quickly.
- The good arrangements to help pupils know about the next stage of their learning mean that they are well prepared, and enthusiastic about the opportunities ahead of them.

The leadership and management are good

- The senior leaders and governors have worked together well to make sure they have an accurate view about how well the school is doing. They compare the data about pupils' performance against national and local data, and look closely at any differences.
- Any issues are identified quickly and appropriate strategies put in place to tackle these. For example, the previous dip in mathematics was identified three years ago, and has been convincingly addressed so that standards have risen quickly to above average.
- This has been done by making sure teachers get the support they need to improve, and that there are agreed approaches to how specific mathematical skills are taught. As a result, teaching has improved since the last inspection and the best ideas about effective teaching are shared and quickly put in place.
- The headteacher and governors of the school show great determination to make sure that every pupil, whatever their ability, gets the support they need to succeed as much as they can. The staff work together to demonstrate the school's commitment to promoting equal opportunities and preventing discrimination.
- Each of the teachers leads at least one aspect of the curriculum, the framework around which the work is planned. Teachers work well together to make sure that the topics pupils study are interesting to them.
- The views of parents, expressed in the on-line survey, were mixed. While most parents agree that leadership and management are effective, a small minority of parents did not agree. The inspector found that the senior leaders have made sure that the school has addressed the issues raised at the last inspection and continues to improve further.
- The local authority has greatly reduced the level of support the school requires, as confidence has grown about how well the school has tackled previous issues. Currently, the school benefits from only light touch support, which has included training to secure the evidence that the school is now a good school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors keep a close check on the effectiveness of the school, working closely with senior leaders and verifying these views for themselves through well-planned visits to see the school in action. They undertake regular training to keep up to date with developments in education and the expectations of the government and local authority. They make sure that all statutory requirements are met, and that any changes in requirements are quickly implemented, particularly where the safety of pupils is concerned. Governors evaluate the way the school checks on the quality of teaching, and make sure that this informs decisions about the pay that teachers are awarded. The finances of the school are managed carefully so that the budget is balanced and the school can make the best use of the resources available. For example, governors check how the pupil premium funding is used and the impact this has in helping eligible pupils to make the best progress they can.

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	114500
Local authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	401443

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	115
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Geoff Forman
Headteacher	David Simon
Date of previous school inspection	23–24 March 2010
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