

Potley Hill Primary School

Potley Hill Road, Yateley, Hampshire, GU46 6AG

Inspection dates 4–5 July 2013

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

- Differences in the quality of teaching result in pupils making uneven progress across the school. This means that they make good progress in some year groups but slower progress in others in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The pace of improvement has not been rapid enough to secure pupils' good achievement. There is not enough consistently good teaching to ensure that pupils make good progress from their starting points.
- Checks on pupils' progress are not used well enough by teachers and leaders to ensure that work set is accurately matched to pupils' needs and that pupils at risk of falling behind are identified promptly.
- Pupils are not always given enough opportunities to apply reading and writing skills to a wide range of meaningful tasks.

The school has the following strengths:

- Recent improvements in the quality of teaching mean that pupils' progress is accelerating.
- The role played by governors has developed well so that they provide effective levels of support and challenge for the school.
- Consistently high-quality provision in Early Years Foundation Stage means that children make rapid progress in their first year of schooling.
- Pupils enjoy school, behave well and feel safe and secure.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed 22 lessons and part-lessons, including two lesson observations with the headteacher.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, a group of governors, a representative from the local authority, senior leaders, staff, parents and carers and pupils.
- The inspectors took account of 79 responses to the online Parent View survey, letters from individual parents and carers, and 32 staff questionnaires.
- The inspectors observed the school’s work and analysed a range of documents and policies, including the school improvement plan, information about pupils’ progress, attendance records, safeguarding documents and a sample of pupils’ work.
- On the first day of the inspection the school had a ‘Transition Day’ when the school was not working to its normal procedures. Year 6 pupils were visiting their new schools and pupils in the school were working in their new class groupings and with their new teachers for the first time.

Inspection team

Julie Sackett, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Anne Duke

Additional Inspector

Philip Scull

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium in this school is well below the national average. (Pupil premium is additional funding provided by the government to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children who are looked after by the local authority and the children of service families).
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.
- The school has an Early Bird Club which is managed by the school and was visited during this inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that information about pupils' progress is used regularly and rigorously by all leaders and teachers to promptly identify those pupils whose progress is too slow and to provide focused and effective support.
- Increase the proportion of teaching which is good or better by ensuring that:
 - teachers consistently use information about pupils' progress to plan lessons and tasks which accurately meet pupils' needs and provide appropriate challenge for pupils of different abilities
 - teachers use their checks on pupils' understanding during lessons to modify tasks to meet individual needs more accurately
 - pupils are given more opportunities to apply what they have learnt about reading in writing tasks and to apply their writing skills in a wider range of meaningful tasks.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Variations in the quality of teaching have led to pupils making uneven progress between year groups and subjects. The progress made by some groups of pupils has been too slow and an element of weak teaching has led to underachievement.
- Inconsistencies in the quality of teaching, particularly in Key Stage 2, mean that pupils have not been able to sustain the rapid gains children make during the Reception Year. As a result, while attainment at the end of Year 2 has been consistently above average in reading, writing and mathematics, attainment is typically average by the time pupils leave Year 6.
- The many staff changes which have taken place over the last two years, particularly at Key Stage 2, have frustrated leaders' efforts to improve pupils' achievement. There has been too little consistently good quality teaching to compensate for staff changes and to address pockets of underachievement.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make similar progress to their classmates. This means that while some pupils in this group make good progress, others make insufficient progress from their starting points.
- Recent improvements in the quality of teaching mean that pupils' progress is accelerating. For example, school information shows that pupils currently in Year 6 have made good progress from their starting points and are on track to reach above average levels in 2013, including an increased proportion attaining the higher levels. However, improvements in the quality of teaching have been too recent to have had a full impact on overall achievement and too much variation remains.
- Children's knowledge and skills when they join Reception Year vary from year to year but are typically above the levels expected for their age. Consistently high-quality teaching means that children make rapid progress during their first year at school. As a result, children's attainment at the end of Reception has improved over the past three years and is typically above average.
- The school is committed to equal opportunities for all its pupils, regardless of gender, background or belief. This is reflected in initiatives to address gaps in learning between different groups, where they exist.
- In the past, there has been a gap between boys' and girls' achievement in reading and writing. The school has successfully narrowed this gap by introducing initiatives which are designed to appeal to boys, as well as girls. For example pupils who are 'reading champions' earn points for successfully completing a range of reading challenges and 'curiosity kits' provide pupils with a collection of reading material relating to their interests.
- The few pupils who speak English as an additional language make progress which is at least expected and often better. This is because support is effectively matched to individual pupils' needs.
- In 2011/12, results of the Year 1 phonics screening check were below the national average. School leaders responded promptly by introducing a more structured scheme to teach the link between letters and sounds (phonics) and by providing training for learning support assistants. Phonics lessons have been moved to the beginning of literacy lessons so that pupils can apply their learning directly to their written work. The success of these steps is evident in the 2012/13 results, which have doubled since 2011/12.
- Pupils who are eligible to receive support from pupil premium funding make similar progress to their classmates, with variations between year groups and subjects. In 2011/12, the attainment of this group was two terms behind that of their classmates and other pupils nationally in English and five terms behind their classmates and other pupils nationally in mathematics. This gap is beginning to close because the quality of teaching has improved and additional support is used in a more focused way to target pupils' needs.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- The quality of teaching requires improvement because there has not been enough consistently good teaching over time to ensure that pupils make good progress. Numerous changes in staffing, including within the senior leadership team, have made it difficult to make and sustain improvements in the quality of teaching.
- There are inconsistencies in the way that teachers use information about pupils' progress to plan lessons. As a result, the match of work to pupils' needs is not always sharp enough, so that sometimes the work set is too difficult for some pupils and too easy for others and the pace of learning slows.
- Teachers do not always respond sufficiently to pupils' emerging needs during lessons. When this is the case, teachers follow the planned lesson too closely rather than making changes to strengthen and challenge pupils' understanding.
- The school is now experiencing a more settled period. An element of weak teaching has been eradicated and teaching is steadily improving. Where teaching is most effective, teachers use their subject knowledge confidently to plan interesting and challenging activities. Interactive whiteboards are used well to engage pupils and to show them how to complete tasks successfully and teachers refer to learning intentions so that pupils understand what they need to do to be successful.
- In Reception Year, enthusiastic teaching and excellent relationships ensure that children are enthused about learning.
- A focus on developing boys' writing skills, including more stimulating material and increased opportunities for all pupils to talk about their writing, has been successful in closing the gap between boys' and girls' achievement. However, there is still more to be done. For example, the school has identified the need to strengthen links between reading and writing skills and to make learning more meaningful by providing better opportunities for pupils to use their skills in a wider range of tasks.
- Learning support assistants generally provide good quality and well-focused support when working with individual pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. Sometimes, however, they are less clear about their role when supporting groups of pupils, so the pace of learning slows.
- Pupil premium funding has been used appropriately to support eligible pupils. For example, 'catch-up' lessons are arranged for pupils who have gaps in their learning. Social skills groups have been used successfully to support pupils' behaviour. The use of pupil premium funding has been focused with increasing clarity on pupils' learning so that the attainment gap between eligible pupils and their classmates is beginning to close.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The school is a positive and cohesive community in which all pupils are valued. Pupils behave well in lessons and when moving around the school. Their behaviour during playtimes and assemblies is especially good, from the youngest children in the school to those in Year 6. Pupils say that behaviour is good in school and almost all parents and carers agree.
- Pupils know about different types of bullying, such as verbal, physical and cyber bullying and have a sensible view of what to do if they have any worries. They know what racism is and are confident that it rarely happens in school. A few parents and carers who responded to Parent View expressed concern about the effectiveness of the school's response to incidents of bullying. School records and inspection evidence confirm pupils' views that incidents are infrequent and that, when they occur, the school responds appropriately.
- Pupils told the inspectors that they feel safe and that adults look after them well if they have any concerns. Almost all parents and carers who responded to Parent View agreed with this view.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are very positive across the school and pupils demonstrate respect for adults and for each other. For example, during the inspection children in Reception Year

talked to each other enthusiastically about their understanding of floating and sinking and listened to the ideas of their classmates with interest. Levels of attendance have improved and are in line with the national average.

- Behaviour is not yet outstanding because occasionally a few pupils quietly 'switch off' during lessons, so that their progress slows.

The leadership and management require improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because, in the past, leaders have been too slow to address variations in the quality of teaching and this has led to pockets of underachievement.
- The use of information about pupils' progress by leaders and teachers has not been robust enough to promptly identify those pupils whose progress is too slow and to provide focused support.
- The headteacher has responded to challenging circumstances with commitment and a determination to get the school back on course after a period of substantial staff turbulence.
- The quality of teaching has improved because staffing arrangements are more settled and training is well focused to support further improvements. The proportion of teaching which is consistently good has increased and an element of inadequate teaching has been eliminated. Effective systems are in place to review how well teachers are performing and these are appropriately linked to the award of pay increases. However, too much variation in the quality of teaching remains.
- The use of information about pupils' progress by school leaders has improved recently. For example, the English and mathematics leaders now rigorously analyse data to track how well pupils are doing and then use this information effectively to check how successfully developments are driving improvements in pupils' achievement.
- The headteacher works closely with the local authority and other advisers. Support provided by the local authority has increased in response to the school's changing development needs. For example, the school is currently working with the local authority to strengthen progression in the development of basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The curriculum provides a wide range of activities which effectively support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The development of pupils' artistic skills and the quality of artwork produced continue to be a strong feature of the school.
- The Early Bird Club provides a positive start to the school day for those pupils who attend.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The role played by governors in holding the school to account has developed well. The Chair of the Governing Body has increased expectations and extensive training has taken place since the previous inspection. As a result, all governors play a more active role in governors' meetings and in visiting the school. Governors confidently compare the school's performance with other schools' nationally and they have an accurate picture of the school's strengths and development needs. They regularly discuss information about pupils' progress with school leaders and ask pertinent questions about any variations in the progress made by different groups. For instance, they know how pupil premium funding is spent and how successfully this is helping individual pupils. Governors know about the quality of teaching and about how pay is used to support and reward performance because they are well informed by the headteacher. Governors recognise that recent improvements mean that the school is 'moving back in the right direction'. Safeguarding arrangements are rigorous and comply with statutory 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	116059
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	403286

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	311
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Katharine Richman
Headteacher	Anne Fletcher
Date of previous school inspection	16 October 2007
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