

Normandy Primary School

Fairford Avenue, Barnehurst, Bexleyheath, DA7 6QP

Inspection dates

9–10 July 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	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

- Teaching is not consistently good in all year groups. Some teachers do not make the purpose of the lesson clear. As a result, the pace of learning slows because pupils in these lessons become confused about what they are to learn and achieve. In addition, they do not behave as well as they should.
- Not all teachers pitch the work at the right level for pupils with different abilities. They do not set high enough expectations for them to work on their own, or in the presentation of their work. A number of teachers do not ensure that pupils act on their advice when work is marked.
- Pupils' knowledge and skills in spoken language, writing and mathematics, whilst improving, are not yet good enough. Results in national tests have been much lower than in most schools for several years.
- Activities in the outside area in Nursery and Reception do not offer increasing levels of challenge in literacy, numeracy and problem solving.
- Essential skills in literacy are not taught consistently well across the school.
- Teachers in Key Stage 1 do not have sufficient knowledge to teach mathematics well. Pupils find it hard to recall number facts and do not always have sufficient resources to carry out activities.
- Arrangements to ensure that staff share the school's high aspirations for pupils, contribute fully to its development and are consistent in the application of policies at a time of high staff turnover are at an early stage of development.
- Too many pupils, especially in Key Stage 1, do not attend often enough.

The school has the following strengths

- Highly ambitious senior leaders, including governors, have taken determined, and successful, action against weak teaching to tackle a legacy of pupils' underachievement.
- Good teaching in Reception, and Years 1, 5 and 6 is bringing about a rising trend in achievement. Almost one third of pupils in Year 6 this year are on course to reach higher than expected levels of attainment.
- Good support for pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding helps them to achieve as well as their classmates in writing and mathematics.
- Pupils feel safe. Vulnerable pupils are looked after very well. The nurture group is successfully helping pupils to gain the skills they need to learn well.
- Behaviour in lessons in Year 6 is exemplary.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 51 parts of lessons of varying length. Many were observed jointly with the headteacher and some with the deputy headteacher.
- Some pupils in Key Stage 1 read to an inspector. Others, from Years 3 to 6, discussed their views of the school. Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at different times around the school, and scrutinised samples of their previous work.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and staff with responsibility for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, English, mathematics, assessment and the Early Years Foundation Stage. Meetings were also held with representatives of the governing body and the local authority.
- The responses of 19 parents who completed the on-line Parent View survey and the views of 300 parents who responded to the school's own questionnaire were taken into account. The opinions of parents expressed in two letters were also considered. Thirty-nine members of staff returned their questionnaires.
- Documents reviewed included the school's improvement plan, the summary of the school's checks on how well it is doing, minutes of meetings of the governing body, records of checks on the quality of teaching, a recent review into the quality of leadership and management, arrangements for appraisal, safeguarding and records of pupils' progress, behaviour and attendance.

Inspection team

Kath Beck, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Debbie Thomas

Additional Inspector

Victoria Turner

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is much larger than most primary schools. The number of pupils attending is rising. There are three classes in Reception to Year 3 and two in Years 4 to 6. Children can attend the Nursery either in the morning or in the afternoon.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium, almost half the school population, is high. This is the additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, looked after children and children of service families. The school currently has few looked after children and no children of service families.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion of pupils supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- Staff turnover is high.
- Almost all pupils are educated on site. The school works with St Augustine of Canterbury Church of England Primary Unit to support a very small number of pupils with challenging behavioural needs.
- The school is following the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. This is known as a 'rights-respecting school'.
- During term time, pupils can attend breakfast and after-school clubs.
- There is a pre-school playgroup on the school site, and a children's centre. These are led and managed by the school and are inspected separately. The reports are on the Ofsted website.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better, by ensuring that all staff:
 - plan activities in lessons that offer sufficient demand for the most-able pupils and also take account of the needs of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs
 - take lessons along at a good pace by making clear to pupils the purpose of the lesson, explaining clearly what they are to learn and achieve so that they do not have to ask for clarification and behave well
 - challenge pupils to think of their own ideas, work independently and take pride in the presentation of their work, especially in mathematics
 - check that pupils respond to teachers' comments, questions and requests to make corrections to improve their work.
- Raise achievement in writing and mathematics by:
 - integrating literacy, numeracy and problem-solving skills into outdoor play activities in the Nursery and Reception classes to offer greater challenge in children's learning
 - extending opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in spoken and written English so that they have a good range of vocabulary to communicate and write confidently
 - developing a good style of handwriting throughout the school
 - helping pupils to apply their good knowledge of the sounds letters make to spell accurately
 - raising teachers' knowledge of the best way to teach mathematics, especially in Key Stage 1
 - ensuring mathematical activities are supported by sufficient resources, and that pupils learn to form their numbers correctly, and recall number facts such as number bonds and multiplication tables quickly.

- Work more closely with parents to improve attendance, especially for pupils in Key Stage 1.
- Strengthen leadership and management by ensuring that all new staff, along with staff already in school, contribute fully to the school's development and aspirations to raise pupils' achievements, and put the school's policies into practice consistently.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- In Year 6, pupils' attainments in English and mathematics have risen and fallen over the past two years. In 2011, they were broadly average, and in 2012 they were much lower than in most schools. High staff turnover and a legacy of past underachievement mean pupils have a lot of ground to cover to catch up. Good teaching in Years 5 and 6 is ensuring more pupils than in the past are on course to reach the levels expected, or higher than expected for their age, this year.
- The attainment of pupils in Year 2 has been much lower than in many schools for several years. Results in national assessments have improved in reading and writing this year, but attainment in mathematics remains low. Pupils' low levels of attendance have an adverse impact on achievements in this age group.
- Children enter the Nursery with knowledge and skills that are well below those expected for their age, especially in their ability to speak confidently. They make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. Children's progress in reading, writing and calculation accelerates in Reception so that the children enter Year 1 well prepared for the next stage in their education. That said, in the Nursery and Reception classes, literacy, numeracy and problem-solving skills are not integrated into the activities that children do outside on their own to offer greater challenge in their learning.
- In Year 1, teachers build well on pupils' prior achievements, but progress in English across the school requires improvement. Not all teachers promote pupils' language development effectively so that pupils acquire the breadth of vocabulary they need to communicate and write confidently. Pupils do not use their knowledge of the sounds letters make well to spell accurately and they do not acquire a good style of joined handwriting.
- In mathematics, progress across the school also requires improvement. Teachers do not have sufficient knowledge, or provide enough resources, to help pupils make the best possible progress. Pupils do not form their numbers correctly and find it hard to remember number facts and multiplication tables to help them to work quickly. Not all pupils take sufficient pride in setting out their work neatly, especially in mathematics. This hinders their progress in calculating and drawing shapes accurately.
- Staff provide good opportunities for all pupils to have an equal chance to succeed. Homework clubs, booster classes, Saturday and holiday schools are helping pupils who attend, especially those with a legacy of underachievement, to make better progress and catch up quickly.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress where they receive one-to-one specialist support with their reading, or work on programmes designed to meet their particular needs. Some have highly complex needs. They, too, make headway, but understandably only in very small steps.
- In 2012, the achievement of pupils in Year 6 for whom the school receives additional funding was similar to that of their classmates in writing and mathematics, but in reading they were over two terms behind. This gap is smaller than often found and is much narrower than in previous years.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- While there is some good teaching, often it requires improvement. The inconsistency of the quality of teaching across classes and year groups hinders pupils' progress as pupils move through the school. Typically in lessons requiring improvement:
 - teachers' planning is not precise enough to ensure that the needs of all pupils are met. Sometimes there is not enough challenge for the more able, and in others the needs of the least able are not given sufficient consideration
 - the pace of the lesson is slow. This is because the purpose of the lesson lacks clarity, and teachers are required to explain what pupils are to learn and achieve more than once

- pupils do not have enough opportunities to work independently. Adults who are supporting them tell them what to do and write rather than challenging pupils to think of their own ideas.
- Teaching across Reception and Nursery classes lacks continuity. In Reception, children have good opportunities to explore their ideas, especially in their activities indoors, and develop their skills across all the areas of learning. In the Nursery, children have few opportunities to make choices about the resources to use to develop their creativity.
- Teachers mark pupils' work regularly, but do not always check that pupils have understood their comments, answered their questions or completed their corrections. This holds back progress.
- Good teaching, especially in Years 1, 5 and 6, helps pupils to fill gaps in their learning. Activities motivate and enthuse them, and they want to do their best. Pupils are very clear about what they are learning and how it links to their daily lives. High-quality questioning and good quality practical activities that they carry out with a partner challenge pupils to think through their ideas and deepen their knowledge and understanding.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

require improvement

- Too many pupils, especially in Key Stage 1 do not attend school often enough or arrive on time. The school takes robust action against parents who do not send their children to school regularly, and is reviewing the ways it can strengthen its partnership with parents to ensure more pupils attend regularly.
- Where teaching requires improvement, pupils lose concentration because they are not sure what they have to do. Time is lost while teachers repeat their explanations or wait for pupils to behave sensibly so that the lesson can continue.
- Pupils say they feel safe, including when using the internet. Bullying has been a concern to some pupils and to their parents. Staff intervene quickly to resolve matters.
- The high-quality nurture group is helping younger pupils to develop their social skills and deal with challenging emotional situations successfully. Breakfast and after-school clubs keep pupils safe and offer further good opportunities for pupils to develop their social skills.
- The school's specialist support staff and partnership with another school with expertise in behaviour management are helping those who find it hard to behave well to take greater responsibility for their actions. The number of times that pupils have been prevented from coming to school because of their behaviour has reduced considerably over the past two years.
- To promote the importance of good behaviour, and ensure that discrimination is not tolerated, the school has made it clear to pupils that it is their right to work in a happy atmosphere. They know that this right carries serious responsibilities. Where this policy has been implemented well, especially in Year 6, pupils' behaviour is exemplary. These pupils are extremely polite to one another and work well together in small groups.

The leadership and management

require improvement

- Leaders and managers have not yet been successful in raising pupils' achievements sufficiently in Year 2, especially in mathematics, or in lowering the high levels of absence. Their strategies to improve the rate of pupils' progress have resulted in a rising trend. This is strongest in Reception, Years 1, 5 and 6, and in the progress of pupils eligible for pupil premium.
- A strong leadership team has been grappling successfully with a long legacy of underachievement within a challenging environment. The rigorous implementation of appraisal procedures that link pupils' progress to pay, and checks on the quality of teaching, has contributed to the high turnover of staff. This is at the cost of some instability, continued inconsistency in the quality of teaching and in the variable implementation of policies such as marking, handwriting and behaviour management.
- Through training and coaching, senior staff have raised the skills of some longer-serving teachers so that pupils in their care now make consistently good progress. The programme for

the development of newly qualified teachers is good quality. It has offered those in school this year many opportunities to improve their practice. The school is well placed to take on and support the high number of newly qualified teachers appointed for September.

- Currently, the leadership and management of the school are in a period of transition. Now that the school is growing rapidly, the senior leadership team, together with the governors, has rightly reviewed the leadership and management structure of the school. From September, the leadership team will be extended with the appointment of new and experienced staff to share responsibilities for the school's overall development.
- Senior leaders are highly ambitious for the school's long-term success. Well-focused school improvement plans are based on robust self-evaluation, and their view of the school's effectiveness is realistic. Improvement plans are checked each term for the impact of the action taken, and amended as necessary to maintain the focus on key priorities.
- The programmes of work that pupils follow, while not yet promoting consistently high levels of attainment, are often practical, captivating and broaden pupils' horizons. The promotion of the 'rights respecting school', opportunities to play a musical instrument, to undertake visits out and to work in groups are promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively.
- The school is developing its partnership with parents and is part of a university research project to improve it. While the majority of those responding to the school's questionnaire are happy with the school, the opinion of the few who completed Parent View do not share the same level of belief.
- The local authority has full confidence in the school. It withdrew its intensive support two years ago. The school, together with other schools in the area, continues to work with the local authority as necessary to provide training to raise the quality of teaching and to carry out checks that ensure that the assessments of pupils' attainment and progress are accurate.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have undertaken a wide range of training, especially in data analysis, successful governance, financial management and safeguarding, to raise their skills and effectiveness. They use their expertise well to challenge and support senior leaders to improve the school's performance against other schools nationally. Through their visits to school, involvement in the school's appraisal and pay review procedures and detailed headteacher's reports, they have a clear view about the quality of teaching.
 - The budget is monitored meticulously. Governors have rightly reduced a high budget deficit quickly and all funds are sharply targeted to bring about improvements. To overcome difficulties caused by high staff turnover, governors have reviewed their recruitment and retention policy and used it to attract new staff in September and encourage good staff to stay longer. Governors contribute fully to the decisions about the allocation of pupil premium funding and know that this is having a positive impact on the progress of pupils eligible for this support. They make sure that safeguarding requirements are met and that the school works closely with a wide range of professionals to keep pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable safe from harm.

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	101450
Local authority	Bexley
Inspection number	404759

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	540
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Smiles
Headteacher	Nickie Forrest
Date of previous school inspection	13–14 July 2011
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