

# Parkland Infant School

Brassey Avenue, Eastbourne, East Sussex, BN22 9QJ

**Inspection dates** 9–10 July 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
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

- There is not enough outstanding teaching, and some inadequate teaching remains. Teachers do not always make it clear what they intend pupils to learn. Some tasks are not sufficiently practical and do not engage pupils. Occasional inaccuracies in the information teachers give confuse some pupils.
- At the end of Year 2, standards have been below average for the past two years, most notably in mathematics. Pupils do not make as much progress in mathematics as in reading and, more recently, in writing.
- Tasks are not always hard enough, particularly for more able pupils. Pupils do not always get enough time to do their work. Occasionally pupils need reminders from teachers to focus on their work.
- Some of the teachers who lead aspects of the school's work have not yet had enough impact in bringing about improvements or sharing the best ideas about how to teach.
- The headteacher and senior leaders' views about the school have taken too little account of the school's performance over time and are too optimistic about recent improvements.
- Until recently, governors have relied too heavily on the information they have received from the headteacher and have not developed their own views based on independent information.

### The school has the following strengths

- The Early Years Foundation Stage is a strength of the school. There are good resources available, children are encouraged to be independent, and adults work well together to support the children's learning.
- Progress accelerates in Year 2. Strategies to improve reading and writing have had some success. Standards have risen and, in 2013, are set to be close to the national averages.
- Reading is a strength of the school. Pupils share their reading with parents and like reading a range of books.
- During free time, the behaviour of most pupils is good. Pupils feel very safe and like being at school. Their attendance is above average.
- Governors and senior leaders make sure that pupils are well cared for and that they feel safe in school.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 16 lessons taught by seven teachers, as well as sessions with small groups of pupils, led by teaching assistants. About half of these observations were undertaken together with senior leaders.
- The inspectors, together with senior leaders, reviewed the work pupils have done in their books across the year and evaluated the teachers' records about the performance of pupils.
- The inspectors held meetings with senior leaders and teachers who lead aspects of the school, during which documents provided by the school were discussed. These included documents about the progress different groups of pupils are making, the school's self-evaluation, procedures and policies to keep pupils safe, and records of meetings, including of the governing body. The school's plans for on-going improvements were also reviewed.
- Inspectors met with pupils, and spoke informally with many of them during break times, and with parents before or after school. Alongside this, the inspectors considered the views of parents expressed through the 44 responses to the on-line survey, Parent View, as well as other correspondence they received from parents. The inspectors also considered the responses to a questionnaire returned by staff at the school.

## Inspection team

Andrew Saunders, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Teresa Kiely

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is an average-sized infant school with two classes in each year group.
- Almost all pupils are White British. A very few pupils speak English as an additional language. Very occasionally these pupils join the school at the early stages of learning English.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is above average. This includes the proportions of pupils supported at school action, at school action plus and with statements of special educational needs.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for support through the pupil premium is above average. This includes pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children looked after by the local authority, and children of parents serving in the armed forces. There are currently no children from service families on roll.
- Since the last inspection, there have been several changes in staff, including a change of deputy headteacher.
- The school includes a breakfast club before school and a club after school. There is also a special unit, the Fledglings, which supports pupils with a wide range of additional needs.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Eliminate any inadequate teaching and develop more outstanding teaching, making sure that teachers:
  - are always accurate in the information they give pupils
  - encourage pupils to be more independent in their learning and give them time to respond to teachers' comments on their work
  - make it very clear at the start of each lesson what it is that pupils are learning to do during that lesson
  - relate the work pupils are given to the real world around them.
- Increase the rate of progress for pupils in Key Stage 1 in mathematics, thereby raising their standards, by:
  - giving pupils work which is more closely matched to their learning needs and particularly challenges the more able pupils
  - allow pupils more time to get on with their work and to do longer pieces of work on their own.
- Improve the effectiveness of leaders across the school in checking and improving the quality of teaching, by:
  - ensuring that teachers focus more closely on developing pupils' skills when they plan mathematics lessons
  - using the data the school has about the performance of pupils to make sure they are being challenged and supported where they need it
  - identify and further develop examples of the very best practice in teaching
  - ensuring that an external review takes place of how effective governance is in identifying key issues and bringing about rapid and sustained improvements.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Over the past two years, the standards reached by pupils at the end of Year 2 have been below average, and have been declining in mathematics. Standards have been rising steadily in reading. Standards in writing and mathematics have also risen this year, and are set to be around the national average.
- From their starting points, this means that pupils have made good progress in reading, but that their progress in writing and, more notably, in mathematics, requires improvement. Not enough pupils reach the higher levels in mathematics.
- When children join the school in Reception, they often have skills and knowledge which are less well developed than is usual for their age, particularly in communicating and writing. They make a good start to their learning because adults are well focused on providing them with activities and resources that are interesting and that challenge them. By the time they move into Year 1, they have made up ground, although in past years have still been below average.
- The very few pupils who enter the school with English as an additional language are effectively supported to make good progress in developing their language skills. As a result, their learning has accelerated, bringing them almost in line with their peer group.
- The progress of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is similar to that of other pupils. A very few pupils who have complex needs are well supported to develop their skills.
- Pupils who are eligible for support through the pupil premium make better progress than other pupils in the school, because of the good support they get from the Fledglings unit. Those pupils who are in Year 2 are now about four months behind other pupils in the school, in reading, writing and mathematics, but the gap in attainment is closing steadily. This is an improvement since 2012.
- Many pupils benefit from attending the breakfast club or after-school club run by the school. The breakfast club helps these pupils to have a good start to their day, and pupils greatly enjoy attending.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Too much teaching requires improvement because teachers do not often enough give pupils work which is specifically designed to meet their particular needs. In particular, more able pupils too often find the tasks they are given too easy. Where there are more difficult tasks planned for them, these pupils are usually expected to complete too much of the easier work before they start on work at the right level. They are also expected to sit through explanations they do not necessarily need, further limiting the amount of time they have to do longer pieces of work.
- Occasionally, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs find the tasks too difficult. They do get opportunities to do tasks which are better suited to their abilities when they go to the Fledglings unit or work in small groups with a teaching assistant.
- Teaching assistants help pupils sensitively and are well informed about the challenges some of the pupils face. They help to gather evidence about how well pupils have understood their work, but this is not always acted upon by teachers as quickly as it could be.
- Teachers are usually confident about the skills and knowledge they are teaching the pupils. However, there are occasions where teachers sometimes give pupils inaccurate information. They do not routinely expect pupils to respond to the comments they make on pupils' work.
- In some lessons, teachers make sure that there is a clear statement about what it is that pupils should be learning during the lesson, and in the very best lessons, pupils help to develop these statements. However, this is not typical and, in some lessons, pupils are unclear about what they are learning.

- Learning is most effective when teachers make sure that pupils can work on tasks that reflect real situations in the world around them. However, this does not happen often enough, and some activities lack real purpose. For example, Year 2 pupils exploring directions about angles and distances, while enjoying the practical nature of the task, were not sure how this would be useful in the world around them.
- Teachers have had training about teaching the sounds that letters or groups of letters make (phonics). Most adults are now confident in using accurate sounds when teaching reading, although some inaccuracies remain.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils**

### **requires improvement**

- Though pupils like their school and feel that it is a good place to learn, many pupils acknowledged that behaviour is not always as good as it could be. They say that there is occasionally silliness which detracts from their learning. Inspectors could see that this does happen, most notably when teaching is not as effective as it could be.
- Around the school, pupils behave well and are polite and pleasant towards one another and are generally cooperative with their teachers. However, pupils say that a very few of them do occasionally have disagreements, and can find it difficult to maintain the behaviour the school expects.
- Almost all parents and staff indicated that they felt that behaviour is good. The inspectors agreed that this is usually the case, but found that pupils do rely on the adults around them to remind them to focus on their work, or to think about how to resolve disagreements.
- Older pupils have some opportunities to share their learning with younger pupils, such as reading and the stories they have written. This helps to build good relationships.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how behaviour is managed in the school, and say that those who find behaving well more difficult are helped to think carefully about the choices they make. The work of the inclusion unit, the Fledglings, is particularly effective in this.
- The school works hard to foster good relationships with parents and carers and tackle discrimination by valuing and celebrating the different backgrounds and heritage of all pupils.
- Attendance is slightly above average. The school makes sure that parents are aware of the impact poor attendance can have on pupils' performance, and encourages good attendance.

### **The leadership and management**

### **requires improvement**

- Leadership has not been strong enough in quickly identifying the issues that led to the decline in progress. While some inadequate teaching has been challenged, some remains. Wider leadership is being developed, but this is at an early stage in some cases. Teachers who lead particular aspects of the school do not yet do enough to identify the most effective teaching, with a focus on the progress pupils make.
- Changes in staff have meant that, for a time, the headteacher had to take on additional responsibilities usually shared with other senior staff. Since the appointment of the deputy headteacher, the analysis of data in the school has been more robust. The recent rise in standards and in the quality of teaching shows that the leaders in the school have the capacity to continue to bring about further improvements.
- Working together, senior leaders have increased the expectation that staff need to understand what the data show about the performance of pupils in their class. This is improving, although it is not yet fully effective, for example in helping more able pupils to reach the higher levels.
- Checks about the quality of teaching are occasionally too optimistic, and focused on what the teachers did rather than the quality of the learning.
- The school has previously developed a creative approach to the planning of pupils' learning, focused around interesting topics. However, this does not have a rigorous enough emphasis on

the specific skills pupils need to develop, particularly in mathematics. There are plans being developed to address this, but they have not yet been implemented.

- The local authority has kept a watchful eye on the performance of the school and has provided senior leaders with some good additional support, including training opportunities and advice on their self-evaluation. This is one factor in the improvements that have taken place.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors have not, until recently, held school leaders sufficiently to account for the decline in standards in mathematics over the past two years, and how the school's performance compares with that of schools nationally. They have too readily accepted leaders' over-optimistic views and have only recently been able to challenge them to demonstrate the evidence to back them up. Since the last inspection, there have been several changes in the membership of the governing body. Although some of the governors are relatively new to the role, they have taken their responsibilities seriously, particularly with regard to keeping pupils safe and making sure all the adults who work with children are suitable to do so. Governors have benefited from training, for example to improve their understanding about what the data show about the school. They have worked with senior leaders to make sure that teachers who receive additional pay are expected to demonstrate evidence that this represents good value, in terms of the quality of their teaching and their leadership. They keep track of how the pupil premium funding is used, and increasingly evaluate the impact this is having on these pupils' performance. Together with the headteacher, they make sure that equality of opportunity is promoted for all groups of pupils and that any discrimination is tackled.
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## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	114465
<b>Local authority</b>	East Sussex
<b>Inspection number</b>	401441

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	180
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Robert Clements
<b>Headteacher</b>	Tim Mehmet
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	14–15 January 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01323 502862
<b>Fax number</b>	01323 503003
<b>Email address</b>	office@parkland-inf.e-sussex.sch.uk



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