

Forest Row Church of England Primary School

School Lane, Hartfield Road, Forest Row, RH18 5DZ

Inspection dates 10–11 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

- Over time, teaching has not been challenging enough to ensure that all pupils make good progress.
- Fewer pupils achieve the standards they should in mathematics.
- In Reception and Key Stage 1, pupils do not consistently make good progress from their starting points.
- Lower attaining pupils in Key Stage 1 do not apply their knowledge of phonics (knowledge of letters and their sounds) well enough and they read hesitantly.
- Teachers do not always make the best use of time in lessons to drive forward pupils' learning. Pupils are inconsistently challenged.
- Improvements introduced by the headteacher have not had sufficient time to ensure consistently good achievement. The role of middle leaders is still developing.
- Governors are now holding the school to account but have not done so well enough in the past.

The school has the following strengths

- In Key Stage 2, standards of attainment in reading and writing are rising due to the steps taken to improve by the school.
- Pupils feel safe and secure and behave well. They have good attitudes to learning and show respect to each other.
- The headteacher is taking firm and effective action. As a result, the quality of teaching has improved in Key Stage 2. This shows that the school is better placed to improve
- Staff have a clear sense of purpose and morale is high.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 16 lessons, including eight which were joint observations with the headteacher, and listened to a sample of pupils reading from Years 1, 2 and 6.
- Inspectors held discussions with pupils, looked at a range of their work and examined the school's data on attainment and progress.
- Meetings were held with representatives of the governing body, senior leaders and teachers. The lead inspector held a telephone conversation with a local authority representative.
- Inspectors considered the 54 responses to the online Parent View survey and a few letters from parents, and spoke to a few parents.
- Inspectors considered responses to the 21 questionnaires returned by staff.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including plans for improvement, safeguarding arrangements, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and records of school leaders' observations of teaching.

Inspection team

Eileen Chadwick, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Alastair McMeckan

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Forest Row Church of England Primary School is average in size compared with most primary schools. Cohort sizes vary and there are currently mixed Years 1/2 and Years 3/4 classes, whilst all other classes contain pupils of a single year group.
- The majority of pupils are White British, although nearly one fifth are from minority ethnic groups, which is above the national average. Pupils are from a range of cultural heritages and a few speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of pupils in receipt of pupil premium funding (additional funding provided for looked after children, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children from service families) is below average. Currently, there are no children from service families.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The number of pupils who join the school other than at the normal time is much higher than in most schools.
- The headteacher took up post two years ago after a period of disruption to senior leadership. In the year prior to the headteacher joining the school, there was an acting headteacher and, until the arrival of the permanent deputy headteacher in September 2012, other senior leaders were temporary.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better by:
 - ensuring teachers teach literacy and mathematics lessons at the right level of difficulty so all pupils make consistently good progress
 - making the most effective use of time during phonics and mathematics lessons
 - in Reception, providing greater levels of challenge during independent learning for reading and writing.
- Raise achievement and accelerate progress by:
 - raising the proportions reaching the expected and higher levels in mathematics in Key Stages 1 and 2 by improving pupils' mathematical problem solving and calculation skills
 - in Key Stage 1, raising the proportions reaching average and higher levels in writing
 - ensuring lower attaining pupils practise their sounds before reading their books.
- Improve the leadership of teaching by:
 - increasing the effectiveness of the leadership of Reception and Key Stage 1
 - ensuring middle leaders develop their roles so they play a full part in improving English and mathematics teaching across the whole school and evaluating the impact on learning
 - providing training for teachers in mathematical problem solving and calculation.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Children enter Reception with variable skills and understanding but overall, they are mainly at the levels expected for their age. They make uneven progress across the school.
- In Reception, the progress of children slows when they play and learn independently. Self-choice activities are insufficiently challenging, especially for reading and writing. Attainment in Year 2 has been only broadly average over time, including in reading. In the current Year 2, standards remain average in writing and mathematics because too few reach higher levels than they should.
- Early analysis indicates that current Year 2 reading standards are above average. However, progress slows in Year 1 phonics lessons when tasks are too easy for more able pupils or too hard for lower attaining pupils. A few low attaining pupils in Key Stage 1 are not given enough opportunities to practise their sounds before reading to an adult, which causes them to read hesitantly.
- Year 6 pupils' attainment in national tests has been average in English and mathematics for the past three years. Standards for current Year 6 pupils are now improving in English and are well above average in reading and above average in writing.
- Standards in mathematics are not improving quickly enough. They are only broadly average for the current Year 6 and fewer reach the expected and higher levels in mathematics than they should. Some pupils have weaknesses in problem solving and calculation skills which prevent attainment rising more quickly.
- Pupils' historic underachievement in mathematics in Key Stage 2 is not being addressed as quickly as in English. The school has eliminated the legacy of weak teaching but, in mathematics in Years 3 and 4, pupils make slow progress on occasions when their work is insufficiently challenging.
- Good progress in mathematics in Years 5 and 6 is beginning to redress some weaker progress earlier in the school. The successful implementation of new systems for teaching reading and writing, including the introduction of phonics, are promoting pupils' good progress in English in Key Stage 2.
- In the current Year 6, all pupils attained the expected standards in reading whilst three quarters attained higher levels. Spelling, handwriting and punctuation are good and pupils successfully write for different purposes across curriculum subjects.
- Well-focused, good support on an individual basis is given to new pupils who arrive during the year, often with gaps in their knowledge and skills. Small-group teaching speeds up the progress of disabled pupils, those with special educational needs, and those from minority ethnic groups, including speakers of English as an additional language. However, the overall progress of these groups is similar to that of their peers as it is uneven due to inconsistencies in class teaching across the school.
- Those in receipt of pupil premium funding also make progress similar to their peers. In last year's Year 6 tests, these pupils' attainment was low compared with national averages. Latest national tests show much improvement. In the current Year 6, standards are average overall with strengths in reading like their peers. The current Year 2 pupils eligible for the pupil premium are attaining standards in line with their peers.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Over time, there has been insufficient good teaching to ensure that all pupils make good progress. Whilst teaching is now improving overall, there is insufficient good teaching in Reception, Key Stage 1 and the early part of Key Stage 2.
- In lessons which require improvement, teachers plan for different abilities but, in practice, do not consistently challenge lower, middle or more able pupils during group work. In

mathematics, pupils are sometimes working at an average level when they are capable of higher levels of challenge.

- The pace of learning sometimes slows because practical activities take up too much learning time and are insufficiently related to the subject being taught. For example, in Key Stage 1, there are instances where there are too many colouring activities in mathematics lessons or sounds and letters activities in the outside area do not make the best use of designated time for phonics.
- In Reception, staff are quick to develop children's communication and personal skills and there is a suitable balance between focused adult-led and independent learning. The school is improving the quality of outdoor learning, but both indoor and outdoor independent activities are insufficiently challenging for developing children's reading and writing skills.
- Good relationships are strengths of teaching and teachers are enthusiastic and keen to improve. In more effective teaching, teachers have high expectations because they have strong subject knowledge and match work well to the needs of all pupils. For example, in an outstanding Year 4 guided reading session, all pupils, including those working independently, made rapid progress because of the way in which key reading skills were taught.
- The quality of marking of pupils' work and target setting in English and mathematics is improving and pupils are now usually clear about their targets, what aspects of their work are good and how they need to improve.
- The use of teaching assistants is inconsistent. Some are deployed well; for example, those supporting pupils with complex learning difficulties often provide good individualised support but teaching assistants are sometimes restricted by the type of activities that teachers provide.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils enjoy school and feel safe. The very large majority of parents are satisfied with the way the school keeps their children safe and most parents feel their children are happy at school.
- Pupils have good attitudes to learning and behave well. In a few lessons, they become distracted and are not ready to learn when teachers do not ensure pupils move smartly from smaller group work to whole-class work.
- Pupils are courteous, respectful and behave well around the school. This helps them to enjoy the very good outdoor facilities where they play together sensibly.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strongly promoted. Pupils and staff have strong respect for each other, regardless of ability, race or religious belief. Pupils are given good opportunities to reflect on good quality literature and the richness of different cultures.
- Since their arrival, senior leaders have worked hard to implement robust procedures for promoting good behaviour. The behaviour policy is consistently applied so lessons are rarely disrupted. School behaviour records show there are very few instances of poor behaviour and any that do occur are investigated thoroughly.
- A few pupils with individual needs find it difficult to behave consistently well for sustained periods of time. However, these pupils are well supported by staff and inspectors found strong evidence to show the effectiveness of the school's work with them over time.
- Pupils have a good understanding of different forms of bullying, such as internet bullying and name calling and say that bullying is very rare. They have confidence in their teachers to sort out any problems. A small minority of parents are not convinced bullying is tackled well enough. Evidence examined by inspectors and discussions with pupils do not support this view.
- Attendance is improving and now in line with national averages. The school has applied stringent attendance procedures this year and is working closely with the few families who do not send their children to school as regularly as they should.

The leadership and management require improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because they have not yet led to securely good teaching and good progress over time. This is due to the lack of continuity in the leadership team and the need to promote strong processes for leading teaching.
- Senior leaders have brought stability to the senior team. The headteacher gives a strong direction and has put systems in place to tackle the school's weaknesses which rightly focus on developing teachers' skills.
- She is well supported by the recently appointed deputy headteacher. Roles and responsibilities are clear, but middle leaders are not yet fully effective at influencing improvements as they are only recently in post. Leadership is currently having more impact on raising achievement in Key Stage 2 than in Reception and Key Stage 1.
- Teaching is improving but remains inconsistent between year groups. Robust tracking and monitoring systems are now in place and senior leaders use these to identify and address any underperformance.
- Staff are now being held to account for pupils' performance. Performance targets are set and regularly reviewed so that staff know and understand how well they are performing. Performance is linked to the level at which teachers are paid and this is beginning to bring about improvements in the rate of pupils' progress
- Regular staff training is having a good impact on improving literacy teaching in Key Stage 2, but there is not yet the same impact in mathematics and in teaching in Reception and Key Stage 1. The school has rightly identified the need for more training for teachers in mathematical problem solving and calculation and more specific monitoring of mental arithmetic sessions.
- Senior leaders have been effective in promoting an overall rise in pupils' reading and writing attainment and the way in which teachers are held accountable for pupils' progress. All staff have a strong drive to improve their practice and pupils' achievement and are welcoming the help they are being given to improve their teaching. This shows the school has the capacity to improve.
- The school's ethos is inclusive in seeking to promote equality and discrimination is not tolerated. The curriculum has been overhauled, is practically based and contributes well to pupils' enjoyment of school and their mature attitudes.
- Throughout the school, pupil premium funding is used effectively to use extra adult help in supporting reading. It has helped identified pupils to overcome barriers to learning and enhanced their personal development and well-being.
- The headteacher initiated a local authority review at the start of this academic year. Since then, the local authority has increased its support for helping senior leaders to improve the quality of teaching. The school values this support and has acted on its recommendations.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are committed to improving the school and are aware they have not ensured progress is fast enough. Until the headteacher arrived, they did not have access to enough assessment or teaching information with which to hold the school to account. They are now challenging as well as supporting the headteacher. Governors have received training which has helped them to understand assessment data. They now have a clear view of how pupils are progressing and how well the school is performing relative to others. They understand how the performance of teaching is being managed. Governors receive information on the quality of teaching and have taken appropriate steps to challenge where teaching has been weak. They understand the link between performance, teachers' salary progression and the targets being set by senior leaders to improve teaching. They set demanding targets for the headteacher. Governors know exactly how pupil premium monies are spent and are able to judge the difference the provision is making to pupils' outcomes. Safeguarding requirements are fully met.

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	114504
Local authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	412643

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	220
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ken Marke
Headteacher	Ann Williams
Date of previous school inspection	10 June 2010
Telephone number	01342 823380
Fax number	01342 823380
Email address	office@forestrow.e-sussex.sch.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2013

