

Grovelands Primary School

Dunbar Drive, Hailsham, BN27 3UW

Inspection dates

16–17 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

- Achievement requires improvement because there are variations in pupils' progress as they move through the year groups. Pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics in classes where the quality of teaching is good, but progress slows in classes where teaching is weaker.
- There is not yet enough consistently good or better teaching to secure pupils' good achievement.
- Where teaching is less effective, teachers' expectations are not high enough and the work set for pupils is not sufficiently challenging.
- Pupils make slower progress in writing than in reading and mathematics.
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- Attainment is typically below average in reading and writing at the end of Year 2 and average at the end of Year 6.
- Changes to the structure of the leadership team have not been in place long enough to secure pupils' good achievement. Subject leaders do not use information rigorously enough to check pupils' progress and the quality of teaching. The governing body does not use information rigorously enough to check progress and the quality of teaching'.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher have an accurate picture of the school's strengths and what needs to be done to secure further developments. Their unswerving focus on the need to improve the quality of teaching means that teaching is improving and pupils' progress is accelerating.
- Pupils are polite and welcoming and they behave well. They feel safe in school because relationships are strong.
- Where teaching is most effective, targets are used well to help pupils to move their learning forward.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed 26 lessons and part-lessons, including one lesson observation completed with the headteacher.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, the chair of governors, senior leaders, staff, parents and pupils.
- The inspectors took account of 66 responses to the on-line Parent View survey as well as e-mails and letters from individual parents.
- 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 and safeguarding documents. A telephone conversation was held with a local authority representative.

Inspection team

Julie Sackett, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Barbara Breed	Additional Inspector
Barbara Saltmarsh	Additional Inspector
Carolyn Steer	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 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 pupils from minority ethnic groups is below the national average, as is the proportion of pupils who 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 of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils achievement, especially in writing, by improving teaching so more is consistently good or better by ensuring that:
 - teachers' expectations of pupils of all abilities are consistently high and work set provides sufficient challenge
 - the pace of learning in lessons is brisk so that pupils make more rapid progress
 - teachers' questioning is used to test pupils' understanding and to move their learning forward
 - the role played by teaching assistants in lessons is closely aligned with pupils' individual needs
 - teachers' marking of pupils' work consistently includes focused comments about what pupils have done well and what they need to do to improve.
- Accelerate the speed of improvement in the school by ensuring that information about pupils' progress is used regularly and rigorously by subject leaders and governors, to:
 - identify groups of pupils who are making slower progress and provide prompt and targeted support
 - check the quality of teaching.
- An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because pupils' progress is variable across the school. Pupils' progress varies between classes, year groups and subjects because there are differences in the quality of teaching.
- Pupils make slower progress in some classes because the quality of teaching is less effective. In the past, weaker teaching has led to underachievement in some year groups and to gaps in pupils' knowledge. Pupils make slower progress in writing than in other subjects.
- Recent improvements in the quality of teaching are accelerating pupils' progress. School information shows that pupils are making rapid progress in classes where teaching is consistently good quality or better.
- Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is typically below average in reading and writing. However, more recent improvements in the teaching of reading and writing at Key Stage 1 mean that pupils are now making better progress. This is reflected in pupils' improved attainment in reading and writing in 2013, with levels of attainment which are closer to the national average.
- In 2012, the results of the Year 1 phonics screening check were below the national average. Targeted training has ensured that teachers and teaching assistants are now more confident and the teaching of phonics (the relationship between letters and sounds) is more effective. Consequently, the results of the Year 1 phonics screening check in 2013 improved substantially.
- Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 has been average in English and mathematics over the past three years. In 2012, there was a dip in English attainment to below average levels. School information shows that attainment in reading and writing has improved in 2013 and is close to the national average.
- Children make good progress during their Reception Year because teaching is effective and children are interested in learning. Children generally start the Reception Year with skills and understanding which are slightly below expectations for their age, particularly in language and communication skills. Attainment at the end of Reception Year has steadily increased over the last three years to average levels in 2013. Children are well placed to build on this solid foundation and to make more rapid gains as they move up through the school.
- In 2012, the attainment of pupils who are eligible to receive support from pupil premium funding was three terms behind that of their classmates and five terms behind that of other pupils nationally. In mathematics, their attainment was one term behind that of their classmates and three terms behind that of other pupils nationally. The gap increased in 2012.
- Support for those who receive the pupil premium has been a particular focus for development in the school and leaders have carefully considered the help needed for individual pupils. School information shows that, as a result, these pupils are now making similar progress to their classmates, with variations reflecting the quality of teaching across the school.
- The small number of pupils in the school for whom English is an additional language typically make good progress because teachers are well informed and understand their needs. .
- The progress made by disabled pupils and pupils with special educational needs varies according to the quality of teaching in different classes. Class teachers now have greater responsibility for setting pupils' targets and for checking and discussing their progress. However, it is too soon for the impact of these improvements to be evident in pupils' overall achievement.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is inconsistent across the school and this has resulted in variations in pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils make slower progress when teaching is less effective.
- Where teaching is weaker, teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are too low; there

is insufficient challenge in the work set and the pace of lessons is too slow. This view was reinforced by the comments of several pupils who told inspectors that they found the work too easy.

- There are variations in the quality of teachers' questioning to move pupils' learning forward. Often, questioning is not used well enough to probe and deepen pupils' understanding. Sometimes teachers are too quick to accept the first answer offered by pupils, rather than following it up with questions to help pupils to test and clarify their understanding.
- While pupils' work is regularly marked, teachers' comments do not consistently provide pupils with advice about how they can move their learning forward.
- While some teaching assistants provide well-focused support for pupils, including those with disabilities or special educational needs, at times the support given is not closely matched to pupils' individual needs and when this happens, their progress slows.
- Despite recent improvements, there is not yet enough consistently good or better teaching to ensure that pupils who have made slower progress in the past catch up and to ensure that overall achievement is good.
- In some classes, when teaching is consistently good or better, pupils make rapid progress. These teachers have high expectations of all pupils, including those who are lower attaining and disadvantaged pupils. Questioning is used skilfully to engage pupils. Teachers understand their pupils' needs very well and know how to tap into their interests and their desire to do well. For example, during the inspection, pupils in Year 2 made rapid progress in the development of scientific skills because expectations were high.
- Relationships are a particular strength in the school so that pupils feel valued. The effect this has on pupils' learning was evident in a Year 5 mathematics lesson, when a disadvantaged pupil made good progress because of the high levels of respect the pupil had for the teacher and because the teacher was clear about the level of work expected.
- A wide range of activities in the Reception Year, including good opportunities for children to use and develop speaking and listening skills, mean that children make good progress in the development of basic skills.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

- Relationships are strong in the school. Pupils are respectful of each other and of adults. They are caring, considerate of the feelings of others and quick to support their classmates when they need help.
- Pupils' behaviour is good in lessons, in the dining hall, during playtimes and when moving around the school. Most parents who completed Parent View agreed. During the inspection, pupils' behaviour during the Year 6 production of 'Alice' was exemplary because they were completely engrossed in the high quality performances.
- A few parents who completed Parent View expressed concern about how well the school deals with bullying. Pupils told inspectors that bullying rarely occurs and that if they do have any worries, adults are quick to provide help. School records confirm this view and show that the school responds appropriately to any allegations of bullying. The school promotes equality of opportunity well and discrimination is not tolerated.
- Pupils are interested in learning and concentrate well, especially when expectations are high and lessons are stimulating. However, behaviour is not yet outstanding because a few pupils lose concentration when the work set for them is not challenging enough and the pace of the lesson is too slow.
- Pupils enjoy school and feel very safe. One pupil said, 'This is a fabulous school!' Attendance is broadly in line with national averages. The school is currently working with parents and agencies to improve attendance, although this increased focus has been too recent to be reflected in improved attendance.

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because there are inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and pupils' progress continues to be uneven across the school. Systems put in place to check that pupils are making enough progress are not yet used rigorously enough by all leaders, including subject leaders and governors.
- Recent developments in the roles played by leaders at all levels, including a complete restructuring of the leadership team, have not been established for long enough for them to play an effective part in analysing pupils' progress and in checking the progress of developments.
- On her appointment, the headteacher quickly identified the need to improve aspects of teaching. She and the deputy headteacher have worked with tireless determination to eradicate weak teaching. However, they are aware that more needs to be done to address inconsistencies and to increase the proportion of good and outstanding teaching. A number of appointments have been made which have helped to bring new ideas into the school and have increased the proportion of effective teaching.
- The local authority has provided valuable support, including training to help teachers to improve their practice.
- The curriculum effectively supports the development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The role played by the governing body has improved since the last inspection because the headteacher has higher expectations of their role and governors have attended training. As a result, their understanding of how well the school is performing is improving. However, their understanding of pupil progress information and how it can be used to check how well pupils are progressing is still in its early stages and lacks rigour. Governors are well informed about the quality of teaching. The headteacher has worked with governors to decide on the best use of pupil premium funding and governors know how eligible pupils are progressing, as this has been a recent focus for the school. Governors know how teachers' performance is managed and how salary progression is used to support and reward effective practice. Safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements and safeguarding training is up to date.

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	114393
Local authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	412368

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	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	608
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Richard Miller
Headteacher	Julie Claxton
Date of previous school inspection	20 January 2009
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