

Northiam C of E Primary School

Main Street, Northiam, Rye, East Sussex, TN31 6NB

Inspection dates 2–3 July 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching		Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Inadequate	4

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires special measures.

- Pupils in Years 1, 2 and 3 underachieve in reading, writing, and mathematics because teaching in these year groups is inadequate.
- Expectations of what pupils can do are not high enough in some classes. Work does not offer sufficient challenge for pupils to do their very best.
- Information from checks on what pupils know and can do is not used by all teachers to plan work that is adapted to meet their different needs.
- Pupils are not always fully aware of what they are learning about and do not have enough resources to work on their own.
- In some classes, the pace of lessons is too slow and activities do not capture pupils' interest. Pupils then lose concentration, do not complete enough work and take little pride in its presentation.
- Not all teaching assistants support pupils' learning effectively throughout lessons.
- Teachers' marking does not always show pupils how to improve their work. Not enough time is set aside for them to correct their mistakes.
- Governors have not acted decisively to secure strong and effective leadership for the school. They have not undergone training to ensure they are fully effective in their roles, including the oversight of safeguarding arrangements.
- Senior leaders have not managed the quality of teaching well enough to prevent slow progress in some classes. Staff are not held accountable for their pupils' achievements. The school's view of its effectiveness is too positive.
- The programme of work in Key Stages 1 and 2 lacks breadth and balance. Not enough time is set aside for physical education.
- Some parents do not have confidence in the school's leaders. They are worried about the way their concerns are dealt with, the information they receive about their child's progress and homework.

The school has the following strengths

- Most teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Years 4 to 6 is good. Sometimes, it is outstanding. Pupils feel safe.
- Some staff are highly skilled in helping disabled pupils or those with special educational needs to overcome their barriers to learning.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed 10 parts of lessons, including small groups receiving extra help to improve their communication skills. Most were observed jointly with the acting headteacher.
- Some pupils in Key Stage 1 read to the inspector. Others, from all year groups, discussed their views of the school. Pupils' behaviour was observed in lessons and at different times around the school. Samples of their previous work were scrutinised.
- Meetings were held with the acting headteacher and staff with responsibility for English, mathematics, and the Early Years Foundation Stage. The inspector also met with representatives of the governing body, and spoke to a senior member of the local authority on the telephone.
- The inspector took into account the responses of 22 parents who completed the online questionnaire (Parent View) and the views of those who responded to the school's own questionnaire. The views of parents expressed in two letters and when parents spoke to the inspector were also considered.
- Documents reviewed included the school's improvement plan, the summary of the school's checks on how well it is doing, a local authority report, governors' minutes, records of checks on the quality of teaching, arrangements for appraisal and safeguarding, and records of pupils' progress, behaviour and attendance.

Inspection team

Kath Beck, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

The school may not appoint newly qualified teachers.

Information about this school

- This school is much smaller than most primary schools. The number of pupils attending is increasing from Reception to Year 3. The number of pupils in each year group in Years 4, 5 and 6 is very small.
- Currently, there are four classes. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and pupils in Year 3 are taught in single-age classes.
- 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 is above average. The pupil premium is the additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children who are looked after by the local authority and those with a parent in the armed forces. The school currently has no children who are looked after or with a parent in the armed forces.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is high. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also high, almost twice the national average.
- Since September 2012 the school has been led by an acting headteacher and acting assistant headteacher. The Chair of the Governing Body took up the role in April 2013. Three members of the teaching staff are leaving at the end of July 2013, including two who are on temporary contracts. The local authority is responsible for managing the school's budget.
- At the time of the inspection, governors were considering a number of options for the future headship of the school.
- There is a privately run nursery on the school site. This is inspected separately and the report is on the Ofsted website.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is good or better, especially in Years 1, 2, and 3, by ensuring that all staff:
 - have high expectations of what pupils know and can do, especially for more-able pupils, including the quantity of work they complete and that it is presented neatly
 - use the information from their checks on pupils' attainment and progress to plan work that is based on their prior learning and takes into account their different abilities
 - make clear to pupils what they are to learn and achieve by the end of the lesson, and provide sufficient resources, especially in English
 - take lessons at a good pace so the pupils do not lose interest and to misbehave
 - provide teaching assistants with clear guidance about how they can support pupils' learning effectively throughout lessons
 - when marking pupils' work, write legibly, show pupils how to improve their work, and give

them time to make corrections.

- Raise pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics by:
 - checking that books the younger pupils read are well matched to their abilities, and that they use their knowledge of sounds and letters effectively to read unfamiliar words
 - providing visual aids, especially for the younger pupils, to help them to spell correctly
 - ensuring pupils apply the skills learned in joining their letters in handwriting lessons to all their work
 - helping pupils to learn their number bonds and multiplication tables, recall them quickly and apply them to problems they have to solve
 - ensuring that the gap in attainment between those known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium and others in the school is closed rapidly.
- Improve the leadership and management of the school, including governance, and build the capacity to improve by:
 - working in partnership with the local authority to secure strong and effective leadership for the school from September 2013
 - taking urgent action to train governors in how to be fully effective in their roles, especially in safeguarding
 - improve the leadership skills of those currently leading the school, especially in accurate self-evaluation and raising the quality of teaching
 - introduce robust appraisal procedures so that all leaders, managers and staff are held to account for pupils' achievements
 - review the programme of work and check its implementation rigorously to ensure that it is broad and balanced, and gives the right amount of time to physical education
 - developing a strong partnership with parents so that they are confident in the way that the school is led, that their concerns are dealt with effectively, that they receive valuable information about their child's progress and homework is appropriate for their child's age
 - conducting an external review of governance in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is inadequate

- After making a good start in Reception, pupils' progress in Years 1 to 3 is too slow.
- Most younger pupils have a good knowledge of the sounds letters make but they do not always use these well to read unfamiliar words. Books for those just starting to learn to read are not always matched well enough to their abilities. When writing, pupils do not have ready access to resources that would help them use a wider range of vocabulary or spell correctly. Teachers do not insist that pupils apply the skills in joining letters learned in handwriting sessions to all their work.
- In mathematics, younger pupils are confident in carrying out simple calculations. Older pupils do not recall number bonds and multiplication tables quickly when solving problems.
- Good and better teaching means the rate of pupils' progress speeds up in Years 4 to 6. National tests results in Year 6 vary from year to year because the number of pupils in this year group is often very small. Attainment was much higher than in most schools in 2011, and broadly average in 2012.
- Only a few pupils who were known to be eligible for free school meals were in the year group which took the national Year 6 tests last year. When comparing average point scores, the gap between the attainment of these pupils and their classmates was wider than usually found. In English and mathematics their attainment was 18 months behind other pupils in the school.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make rapid progress in the development of their communication skills in Reception. The school implements advice from speech and language experts very well. High-quality support staff ensure that those in Years 4 to 6 also make rapid progress.

The quality of teaching is inadequate

- Typically in lessons where teaching is inadequate and progress is slow, teachers' expectations of what pupils can do and achieve are not high enough. Teachers do not take into account information from their checks on what pupils have learned before. Work is not adjusted to meet their different abilities.
- Pupils become confused when introductions to lessons are too long and do not make clear what they need to do. Lessons are interrupted and the pace slows while teachers clarify the task several times.
- When marking pupils' work, teachers do not show pupils how to improve it and make better progress. They do not give them sufficient time to correct their mistakes. In some cases pupils do not understand what to do because they cannot read their teacher's writing.
- Teaching assistants are not used consistently well to support pupils' learning at all stages of the lesson. They are not always given a clear role or guidance on how to help those they are working with to achieve well.
- In Reception, children make good progress because they are well supported by both the teacher and specialist teaching assistants. Staff know the children very well and offer high levels of challenge and support in a wide range of activities that motivate them to do their best.
- Good and sometimes outstanding teaching in Years 4 to 6 helps the pupils make up lost ground. High-quality questioning challenges pupils to think through their ideas and deepen their understanding. Activities often link skills in mathematics and English to other subjects and pupils' daily lives. This makes learning purposeful.

The behaviour and safety of pupils requires improvement

- Where teaching is not fully effective, pupils sometimes lose interest. They do not always listen

carefully and occasionally call out. Time is sometimes lost while teachers remind pupils of how to behave, and this holds back the progress of some pupils. Pupils do not always complete enough work, and some take little pride in setting it out neatly.

- Senior leaders are working closely with parents to ensure that pupils attend school more regularly. Serious health issues and an outbreak of a contagious illness have had an adverse impact on pupils' attendance this year.
- Pupils say they feel safe and that adults will look after them if they are worried. They know about different types of bullying and say it happens rarely. They also know how to keep safe when using the internet at home or in school.
- In Reception and Years 4, 5 and 6, pupils become engrossed in their learning, work together in small groups very well, and respond with enthusiasm to the challenges set by their teachers. Their behaviour is exemplary and helps them to make faster progress.
- Pupils taking on the roles of playground buddies and school councillors carry out their roles sensibly. Others who look after the school's pets are proud that they carry the responsibility for their well-being.

The leadership and management are inadequate

- Leadership and management are inadequate. Checks on the quality of teaching have identified weaknesses. However, coaching, training, and additional support have not brought about the anticipated rapid improvement.
- The local authority has provided considerable support to the school and has also taken control of the budget. Earlier this year it challenged governors to take urgent action to secure strong and stable leadership in the longer term. Governors have carried out considerable research about the options available to them. This has taken too much time and they have yet to reach a firm conclusion. These factors, together with many staff changes, mean the school does not have the capacity to improve without significant outside support.
- The school's view of its effectiveness is unrealistic because senior staff focus too heavily on the positive aspects of the school. They do not check rigorously, or quickly enough, the impact of action taken to overcome weaknesses.
- Senior leaders, teachers and teaching assistants are not held accountable for their pupils' achievements. Staff have not been set targets based on pupils' progress during the appraisal process, nor are their targets linked to pay progression.
- Pupils do not have an equal opportunity to succeed because there are marked differences in the quality of teaching across year groups. More-able pupils are not always challenged sufficiently, while the needs of those with a disability or special educational needs are often met well.
- The programme of work is not broad and balanced. In Years 1 to 3, in particular, too much time is spent teaching pupils skills in English to the detriment of other subjects, such as physical education. In Reception, children enjoy a wide range of captivating activities that promote good levels of skill in their early reading, writing and mathematical development.
- Two fifths of parents responding to Parent View do not have confidence in the school's leadership and management, or that their concerns are dealt with well. One third does not consider they receive valuable information from the school about their child's progress.
- A recent consultation with parents about homework led to a change in the type of homework the school provides. However, some remain concerned whether it is appropriate for their child's age.
- Discrimination is not tolerated. Through their work on the United Nations and other countries, pupils are taught to value different cultures and faiths. Their studies of famous artists, debates about what they want for the future of the world, and group work in lessons promote their spiritual, moral social and cultural development well.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have not undertaken sufficient training to carry out their roles effectively. Pupils are safe, but currently there is no governor trained to oversee the school's arrangements for safeguarding. Governors do not have the knowledge and skills to challenge and support senior

leaders and hold them to account. Governors rely too heavily on reports from senior leaders which are overly optimistic and do not provide an accurate view of the school's effectiveness. Governors know about pupils' attainment in Years 2 and 6, and how this compares to other schools nationally. They are aware that there are concerns about the quality of teaching for some year groups. They are not aware of the impact of teaching on pupils' progress, and that action taken has not been successful in bringing about improvements. Governors have little knowledge of the school's procedures for the appraisal of staff. The policy has only very recently been approved. They have not been involved in setting targets for the acting headteacher. They have not been included in the procedures for assessing teachers' performance or pay reviews for all staff. They know how pupil premium money is spent, but not the impact it has on pupils' progress. Until the issues for the longer-term leadership of the school are resolved, the local authority has indicated that it will retain responsibility for the budget.

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	114516
Local authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	401446

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	75
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Richard Foster
Headteacher	Sarah LePort (Acting)
Date of previous school inspection	2–3 March 2010
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