

Oliver's Battery Primary School

Austen Avenue, Oliver's Battery, Winchester, Hampshire, SO22 4PH

Inspection dates 15–16 October 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		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement.

- Pupils' achievement in Years 3 to 6 has been too varied during the past two years and so pupils have not reached the standards they are capable of.
- Attainment by the end of Year 6 is broadly average in mathematics but below average in English.
- Pupils do not always have enough opportunities to apply their writing skills in a range of subjects.
- There are gaps in pupils' learning, such as calculation skills.
- Teaching is improving but it has not been consistent enough since the last inspection to promote good progress in Years 3 to 6.
- Learning tasks are not always pitched correctly for the differing abilities of pupils. This adversely affects their progress.
- Pupils do not always have sufficient guidance and instructions to help them learn well.
- The vision and direction of the school are not sufficiently articulated to parents and staff by the school's leadership.
- Staff expertise and skills are not fully utilised in moving the school forward.
- Systems for checking the progress of different groups of pupils are not sharp enough.
- The school has not been effective enough in building partnerships with parents and in communicating the school's direction.

The school has the following strengths

- In Reception, children have a good start to school and make good progress.
- Pupils also make good progress through Years 1 and 2.
- The headteacher, staff and governors are taking positive steps to accelerate pupils' progress through Years 3 to 6.
- Most pupils have positive attitudes to learning and behave well in lessons and around the school.
- In some lessons, pupils' attitudes and behaviour are outstanding.
- Pupils feel safe and well cared for by staff.
- The local authority is providing good support in helping the school to improve.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 16 lessons. Some of these were seen jointly with the headteacher.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, staff, a representative from the local authority, governors and pupils.
- The inspectors took account of the 71 responses to the online survey (Parent View) and correspondence from parents.
- Questionnaires from 12 members of staff were analysed.
- The inspectors examined school policies, information about pupils' attainment and progress, teachers' plans, pupils' work and the school's development planning.

Inspection team

Derek Watts, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Carol Worthington

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school.
- Most of the pupils are White British. Other pupils come from a range of different ethnic backgrounds.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is average. The proportion supported through school action plus or a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- An average proportion of the pupils are eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for pupils in local authority care, those known to be eligible for free school meals and other groups.
- The headteacher took up the post in January 2012.
- There have been several changes to the teaching force since the last inspection.
- The school meets the government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that it is good or better in all classes by:
 - ensuring that teachers always set tasks at the right level of difficulty for individual pupils
 - making sure that individuals and groups are always given sufficient guidance and instruction to help them to learn well.
- Accelerate pupils' progress in Years 3 to 6, particularly in writing and mathematics, by:
 - identifying gaps in pupils' learning and taking effective action to fill them
 - increasing opportunities for pupils to apply their writing skills in a range of subjects
 - improving pupils' calculation skills in mathematics.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - formulating a shared direction for the school where the expertise and skills of the staff are fully utilised to bring about improvements
 - strengthening the systems for checking the attainment and progress of different groups of pupils
 - establishing positive partnerships with parents by seeking their views and effectively conveying the school's direction to them.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because pupils' progress in Year 3 to 6 has not been consistent enough since the previous inspection. As a result, pupils, including those who come from a range of ethnic backgrounds, have not reached the standards they are capable of.
- Attainment by the end of Year 6 has varied and has not been high enough. In the 2012 national tests for Year 6, results were average in English but below average in mathematics. The Year 6 results in 2013 are looking average in mathematics, but below average in reading and writing. However, national comparative data are not yet available to ensure accurate evaluation.
- Leaders and staff are taking positive steps to raise pupils' achievement in Years 3 to 6, but pupil progress is not yet consistently good in all classes. Pupils in some year groups have gaps in their learning because of weaknesses in teaching in the past.
- There are weaknesses in some pupils' calculation skills in mathematics. In writing, pupils are not having sufficient opportunities to apply and develop their writing skills in different subjects.
- Children begin in Reception with knowledge, understanding and skills broadly expected for their age. They make good progress because of good teaching and the interesting range of learning activities provided.
- Good progress continues through Years 1 and 2. Attainment by the end of Year 2 has steadily risen in recent years and was above average in 2012.
- Children in Reception and pupils in Years 1 and 2 are making good progress in reading because of the effective teaching of reading skills including phonics (letters and the sounds they make). The results of the Year 1 reading checks have been above average.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make similar progress to that of other pupils.
- In 2012 the few pupils supported by the pupil premium attained much lower standards in reading, writing and mathematics than the others. These pupils were about two years behind the others. Improved support means that this group of pupils are now making faster progress and the gap in attainment is rapidly closing.
- Pupils are developing healthy lifestyles and physical fitness through the school's physical education programme and the additional range of sporting activities on offer.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching is improving, but it has not been consistent enough in the recent past to ensure that most pupils make good progress in all classes in Years 3 to 6.
- Activities and tasks have not always been at the right level of difficulty for pupils. In particular, the work has not always been closely matched to the abilities of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. This situation is improving because of the action being taken.
- In a few observed lessons, the guidance and instruction from the teacher were not sufficient to promote good progress for groups or individuals.
- Weaknesses in assessment and teaching in the past mean that some pupils in the upper part of the school have gaps in their learning in areas such as mathematical calculation. Teachers are striving to identify and fill these gaps.
- There are clear signs that teaching is improving. Most lessons have a clear purpose and the matching of tasks to pupils' needs is becoming stronger. Learning and the flow of the lesson maintain a good pace.
- Throughout the school, teachers and teaching assistants have established good relationships with pupils. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. Pupils work well in pairs or in small groups in learning activities.
- In Reception, children are provided with a range of interesting indoor and outdoor activities.

They receive well-focused teaching from adults. There are also good opportunities for children to explore and learn independently. Children make good progress in the areas of learning.

- There are examples of outstanding teaching. In these lessons, teachers successfully engage the pupils and they make exceptional gains in deepening their knowledge and understanding and in applying skills.
- Pupils in a Years 1 and 2 class made exceptional progress in extending their reading and comprehension skills because the teacher expected the pupils to do their very best and ensured that tasks were well suited to their different needs. Skilful questioning checked pupils' understanding of the work. Pupils were successfully encouraged to read with accuracy, expression and fluency. They made rapid gains in their knowledge of carnivorous plants.
- In a highly effective English lesson in Year 6, pupils used their reading skills very well to identify key facts from texts about litter and dog fouling. With high-quality explanations, challenging questioning and clear demonstrations by the teacher, pupils quickly gained new knowledge of how to write a formal letter of complaint. They planned and wrote a letter to the city council about litter in local parks. In their writing, they used a formal style, facts, opinion, rhetorical questions, and emotive language to great effect.
- The teaching of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is good in Years 1 and 2, and improving in Year 3 to 6. Teaching, support and activities are now more closely matched to the pupils' individual needs.
- The marking of pupils' work, the setting of learning targets for pupils and teachers' oral feedback are effective. As a result, pupils know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Most pupils show a keen interest in their learning and participate well in the activities provided. Pupils commented to the inspectors, 'Our lessons make you think.' 'School is fun and we learn a lot.' However, a few pupils are less well focused and lack a thirst for learning.
- Pupils are courteous and friendly. They show consideration and respect for others. In lessons and assemblies, pupils show care, taking responsible stances on matters such as inequality and protecting the environment. They raise funds for national and international charities.
- Behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. Where the teaching is outstanding, pupils' attitudes to learning and their behaviour were impeccable. The school's records of incidents show that behaviour is usually good over time and that effective steps are taken to deal with any unacceptable behaviour. Pupils feel safe at school because they are well looked after by adults.
- Pupils show a good understanding of bullying and the different forms it can take, including persistent name calling, physical bullying and cyber bullying. Pupils informed inspectors that bullying in the school was rare. They find the teachers and staff very supportive and are confident that any inappropriate behaviour, including bullying, would be swiftly dealt with.
- Attendance has improved recently and is now securely average.

The leadership and management require improvement

- Leadership and management have not been effective enough in the past in promoting good teaching and good progress for pupils in Years 3 to 6.
- The headteacher has not successfully communicated the school's direction to parents and staff. As a result, not all staff know what the school is trying to achieve. The expertise and skills of staff are not being fully utilised to help bring about improvements.
- The partnership with parents is not good enough and parents have expressed concerns, particularly about the turnover of staff and the lack of communication about the school's direction. Most of these concerns are justified and leaders and the governing body are keen to resolve these matters quickly.

- Systems for checking and tracking the attainment and progress of different groups are not sufficiently robust, but there are plans to tackle this so that leaders and staff have a clearer overview of how each individual is performing.
- Positive steps are being taken to accelerate progress in Years 3 to 6 and to strengthen the teaching. There are now some good systems for checking the quality of teaching. There are also good procedures for cross checking the findings of class observations with the progress that pupils make over time and with the quality of their work. This method ensures that judgements on teaching are not solely based on planned observations.
- Leaders and managers have promoted good achievement and good teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2.
- The leader of the Early Years Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2 and the new leader of Years 3 to 6 lead by example in the classroom. There are plans to share this practice with others.
- There are appropriate procedures for checking the performance of staff. Targets to improve teachers' skills are well linked to the school's improvement priorities. Staff promotion and salary increases are correctly based on responsibilities and the progress that pupils make.
- The pupil premium funding is being properly used to provide eligible pupils with additional support. The progress of pupils supported by the premium is improving.
- There is an appropriate range of subjects and topics to promote pupils' learning. Pupils enjoy the good range of additional activities, such as sports clubs and educational visits. Action is being taken to strengthen learning opportunities in writing and mathematics. The use of the sports grant is well planned.
- Pupils learn and develop in a caring and safe community. All have equal access to the full range of learning opportunities provided. There are no signs of discrimination in the school.
- The local authority has an accurate overview of the school's performance. Good support is being provided to move the school forward.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Members of the governing body have an accurate and realistic view of the school's effectiveness, particular pupils' achievement in relation to similar schools nationally. They are aware of the pressing need to raise pupils' achievement in Years 3 to 6 so that most pupils make good progress. However, they have been less well 'in tune' with the views of parents. Governors receive accurate and clear information about the quality of teaching. They understand recent requirements relating to the management of staff performance and the importance of promotion and salary increases being linked to pupil progress. Governors ensure that pupil premium funding is properly spent and are checking how well these pupils are progressing. They have ensured that all safeguarding procedures meet requirements.

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	116046
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	426442

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	226
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alison Walker
Headteacher	Sue Mudie
Date of previous school inspection	November 2011
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