

Willingdon Primary School

Rapsons Road, Eastbourne, East Sussex, BN20 9RJ

Inspection dates 7–8 November 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		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because:

- Teaching is not consistently good, and so not all pupils achieve as well as they should.
- The progress of pupils, including those in receipt of pupil premium funding, is too variable.
- Progress in writing and mathematics is not as fast as in reading. Some teachers lack confidence and sufficient expertise in teaching mathematics, and teachers provide limited opportunities for pupils to write freely in lessons other than those with a literacy focus.
- Teachers' expertise in teaching pupils how to link sounds and letters (phonics) is variable and slows progress in acquiring phonics skills, as evident in Key Stage 1 phonics checks.
- Sometimes the teaching does not give enough scope to pupils, especially higher-attaining and more-able pupils, to work independently away from the teacher's direct instruction and at levels appropriate to their ability.
- Teachers rely too much on worksheets and set tasks which sometimes restrict pupils' learning opportunities.
- Teachers' marking and feedback to pupils about their work are not used consistently enough to help them improve their work to the next level.

The school has the following strengths:

- The headteacher, supported by a leadership team and knowledgeable governing body, is strongly committed to raising achievement and has carried through some significant improvements since the previous inspection.
- The leadership has high expectations and checks the quality of teaching and learning rigorously. Staff response shows that the school has the capacity to improve further.
- Improving teaching and achievement, which are the result of extensive support and initiatives, mean that many pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, are now on track to meet appropriately challenging targets.
- Pupils behave well, are keen to learn, feel safe and well cared for, and attend school at a rate above the national average.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 23 lessons and several shorter sessions. Five of the observations were carried out jointly with members of the senior leadership team. Fourteen teachers were observed.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, a group of pupils, staff, five governors and a representative of the local authority. Inspectors also talked to parents and carers.
- The inspection team observed the school’s work and looked at documentation, including the school improvement plan, the school’s self-evaluation, data on pupils’ progress, samples of pupils’ work and information relating to safeguarding.
- The inspection team took account of 101 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and the responses made in 47 staff questionnaires.

Inspection team

John Laver, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Velia Hartland

Additional Inspector

Lynne Thorogood

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The great majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- A tiny minority of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding for children known to be in the care of the local authority, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those from service families) is less than half the national average.
- The proportion of pupils at school action and the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs are both below average. There are several pupils with hearing impairment who receive specialist support from staff provided by the local authority.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Children in Reception are taught in two classes, and there are two classes in each of the other year groups in the school.
- There have been several changes in staffing, a restructuring of the senior leadership team, and the appointment of several new governors since the previous Ofsted inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- The headteacher should continue her strategies to improve teaching so that it is consistently good or better in Key Stages 1 and 2 by getting all teachers to:
 - use pupils' targets and information from assessment routinely to ensure that all pupils are set tasks which are challenging enough to enable them to learn to the best of their ability
 - provide more opportunities for pupils, especially higher attainers, to work beyond the direct instruction of the teacher
 - ensure that pupils respond more regularly to teachers' comments in their written work and are given clear indications of how they can improve their work to the next level
 - improve their expertise in showing younger pupils how to link sounds and letters (phonics).
- Raise achievement in writing and mathematics, so that more pupils leave school with above average levels of attainment in these basic skills, by:
 - giving pupils fewer worksheets and providing them with more opportunities to write freely in different subjects and lessons
 - further improving teachers' confidence and expertise in teaching mathematics to a higher level
 - ensuring that pupils in receipt of pupil premium funding are given sufficient support to enable all of them to improve their achievement at similar or better rates than other pupils in the school.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Children join Reception with attainment broadly in line with expectations for their age. The teaching of children in Reception has improved since the previous inspection. Teachers assess children accurately and provide a good balance of activities which encourage children's independence and development of basic skills, for example in improving their word recognition and linking of sounds and letters. As a result, children make good progress by the end of the Reception Year.
- Throughout the rest of the school, attainment and achievement have also risen since the previous inspection, but at a more variable rate, which is why achievement requires improvement. Progress in mathematics and English is slower in Key Stage 1 than in Key Stage 2. The slower progress in English has been reflected in below average results in phonics checks. There is also more variability in the quality of teaching and in the relative expectations of what pupils can achieve in Key Stage 1. Throughout, pupils' progress in writing is slower than in reading.
- Despite improvements in teaching there are still variations in the rate of pupils' progress, because some improvements are still at an early stage and expectations of some teachers are not consistently high enough. This is reflected in some of the topic work, where the writing tasks often do not encourage pupils to demonstrate the levels of skill of which they are capable.
- In a few lessons observed, pupils' obvious keenness to learn was not given free rein, because the pace and challenge of the lesson and the tasks set were too restricting. In these lessons pupils, including higher attainers, do not learn as effectively as they should. This was observed, for example, when introductions to lessons went on for too long without introducing new concepts or skills appropriate to pupils' needs.
- Some pupils in receipt of pupil premium funding are making good progress and reaching standards in line with or better than other pupils in the school. However, too many are making slower progress in English and mathematics than other pupils in the school and in comparison with similar pupils in other schools.
- There has been a significant improvement in the progress of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs since the previous inspection. The detailed assessment of these pupils and the provision of specialist support are enabling them to make good progress. Those pupils with hearing impairment share in this good progress.
- A significant minority of parents and carers report concerns about the progress of pupils. The pupils themselves told inspectors that they are confident that they now make better progress. Pupils' work and assessment data show that by the time pupils leave school at the end of Year 6, more now make good progress than previously and at a rate above that expected nationally. Pupils are increasingly on track to meet the rigorous targets set.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Variations in the quality of teaching in Key Stages 1 and 2 means that not all pupils achieve as well as they should in some lessons. Therefore teaching requires improvement.
- In some mathematics lessons teachers lack confidence in some aspects of the subject or they do not set pupils tasks appropriate to their ability early enough in the lesson, so pupils make less progress than they should.
- Occasionally, teachers spend too long on introductions, going over work which does not move pupils' learning on quickly enough, and there are missed opportunities to extend their skills. This was observed in lessons when pupils were given low-level tasks not appropriate to their age or stage of learning.
- Teachers typically make constructive comments in pupils' books. However, they do not

consistently make pupils respond to their marking, use pupils' targets in their everyday teaching, or give clear enough indications of how pupils can take their work to the next level. Pupils' targets are not used consistently to influence progress in everyday lessons.

- The leadership has worked hard since the previous inspection to improve the overall standard of teaching, with some success, as was observed during the inspection and evident in the school's own records of its monitoring.
- Where there are strengths in teaching, for example in Reception, teachers typically manage their classes well and have a good working relationship with their pupils. In the best lessons, teachers have high expectations and are rewarded by pupils making rapid progress. This was observed, for example, in both a dance lesson and a mathematics lesson for older pupils. The pace and challenge of the dance lesson kept all pupils fully engaged and committed in exploring the creative possibilities and health benefits of dance. In the mathematics lesson, higher-attaining pupils were challenged to work out problems for themselves. However, this level of expectation and challenge is not typical of all lessons in Key Stages 1 and 2.
- Teachers and other staff usually give good support to pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs, and consequently they now make good progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Behaviour is not yet outstanding because there are occasional incidents when learning is disrupted, although pupils confirm that these are relatively infrequent and are dealt with promptly.
- Although some parents and carers have concerns about the way in which the school manages behaviour, the evidence of the inspection is that behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. Pupils are keen to learn and respond well to good teaching, which is a significant factor in the improving achievement.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the various types of bullying. For example, the school gives a very high priority to keeping parents, carers and pupils informed about how to ensure e-safety. Pupils talk knowledgeably about bullying, but insist that it is not a significant issue in the school. There have been no exclusions in recent years.
- Pupils feel safe and enjoy school. This is confirmed by the high rate of attendance, which is now well above average.
- The school encourages pupils to take responsibility, and pupils greatly enjoy the opportunities. They are enthusiastic about their school council and take responsibility for running some assemblies. They raise funds for charities and large numbers participate enthusiastically in initiatives such as 'Bike-it', which make a strong contribution to promoting a healthy lifestyle. Pupils also enjoy the frequent visits, including the Year 6 residential.

The leadership and management are good

- Leadership is not yet outstanding, because there is still work to be done on raising achievement of all pupils, including those in receipt of pupil premium funding, and improving the overall quality of teaching. The curriculum does not yet provide the full range of opportunities for pupils to develop their skills to the highest levels.
- Leadership and management have brought about several improvements since the previous inspection. Several initiatives are still at a relatively early stage. Some, such as radically restructuring the provision for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, have already made a significant impact on progress. Others, such as improving the teaching and progress of pupils in receipt of the pupil premium, are still having a limited impact. Progress has sometimes been slowed by changes in staffing.
- There is good curriculum enrichment. For example, there is a wide range of educational visits,

and large numbers of pupils learn to play musical instruments.

- The headteacher has an accurate and realistic view of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. These are reflected in school improvement planning, which is focused on appropriate priorities. The headteacher's commitment to sustaining and furthering improvement is shared by other senior leaders and has been largely taken on board by other staff. The progress being made shows a capacity for further improvement.
- The checking of the quality of teaching and learning has improved considerably since the previous inspection. It is now regular and systematic. Other staff with leadership or management responsibilities increasingly share in the monitoring, although this is still a developing process.
- Staff accountability has increased markedly since the previous inspection. All staff are now held directly accountable for pupils' progress and take part in meetings to discuss pupils' progress, analysing the data and considering the needs of all their pupils. The headteacher ensures that pay is linked to responsibility and progress.
- Regular meetings are held to consider the progress of all pupils. These have led to more systematic support for pupils at risk of underachieving.
- The school has plans in place to make the best use of primary sports funding. There is a high participation rate in sport and healthy lifestyle activities. Governors have taken a direct interest in furthering the initiatives, for example by contributing to an action plan. Pupils were observed working to the best of their ability in physical education sessions.
- The school increasingly benefits from its partnerships with other local schools. For example, staff have opportunities for joint training and pupils sometimes use the facilities provided by other schools, such as for swimming.
- The school has worked hard to address the negative responses which several parents and carers have expressed about the school's provision for their children. The leadership tries, with varying degrees of success, to engage parents and carers in school activities, for example by inviting them in to celebrate pupils' work.
- The school takes pride in being very inclusive. It is a friendly place, which does not tolerate discrimination.
- There is good provision to promote spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. The results were observed in assemblies which celebrated achievement and encouraged pupils to reflect.
- The school meets safeguarding requirements, and encouraging staff and pupil awareness of issues such as safe use of the internet has a high priority.
- The local authority has provided considerable support for the school to address issues from the previous inspection. It has plans in place to contribute further support where appropriate.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has undergone radical restructuring since the previous inspection. Governors are very active in the school; for example, a governor routinely attends meetings when pupils' progress is considered. Governors are conscious of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching, and they also understand assessment data and how well the school is doing in relation to other schools. They appreciate the importance of improving the progress of pupils in receipt of pupil premium funding and their role in implementing primary sports funding. They understand how staff performance is assessed and how pay is linked to outcomes. As well as knowing the school very well and fully backing the leadership, the governing body has the confidence and knowledge to challenge the leadership when appropriate as, for example, when analysing the impact of pupil premium funding. Governors are fully committed to playing their role both in holding the school to account in all areas and ensuring that the drive for improvement is sustained.

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	114422
Local authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	426432

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	422
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ali Walters
Headteacher	Judith Cooper
Date of previous school inspection	19–20 January 2012
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