

Ringmer Primary School

Harrisons Lane, Ringmer, BN8 5LL

Inspection dates 20–21 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		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Teaching is not yet consistently good because teachers do not always use assessment information to set work at the right level for pupils or explain precisely how to succeed in lessons.
- Progress across Key Stage 1 is weaker than across Key Stage 2.
- Progress in writing and mathematics across Key Stage 2 is weaker than in reading.
- The most able pupils are not always challenged enough, particularly in their writing. Pupils supported through school action and school action plus do not always make enough progress in mathematics and sometimes writing.
- Pupils do not always know how they can improve their work and are not given enough opportunities to respond to teachers' marking.
- There are gaps between the attainment of pupils supported through the pupil premium funding and their peers.
- Leaders do not use information about pupils' progress and the attainment of groups of pupils well to track gaps in learning between groups of pupils across the school. Also, they do not always use this information when making judgements about teaching.
- School development plans do not state who will be responsible for an action, set time deadlines or indicate ways in which the success will be measured.
- Targets for the performance management of staff are not always precise enough to promote good achievement for pupils.
- The governing body is not well informed enough about the achievement of groups of pupils over time to effectively challenge senior leaders.

The school has the following strengths:

- Provision for children in Reception has improved.
- The school is a welcoming community where pupils feel safe and behave well.
- Pupils have good opportunities to work in groups and celebrate their accomplishments.
- Pupils enjoy good opportunities to participate in a range of sporting, musical and cultural activities.
- Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school, and staff are committed to it.
- Leaders have raised expectations at the school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in 20 lessons or part lessons in all classes. Some of these observations were conducted jointly with senior leaders.
- They took account of 64 responses to the Parent View online survey, verbal and written comments from parents and 21 questionnaire responses from staff.
- Meetings were held with pupils, leaders at all levels, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' work in lessons, and separately with the headteacher.
- They heard pupils reading, and observed them in class and around the school.
- Inspectors considered a wide range of school documentation including: information relating to the attainment and progress of pupils and groups of pupils from entry to the school and across different years; the performance management of staff; records of lesson observations; the school's website; the school's development plans; its checks on how well it is doing; minutes from governing body meetings; and behavioural records, safeguarding information and information about how sports funding would be spent.

Inspection team

Najoud Ensaff, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Fiona Robinson

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Ringmer Primary School is an average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. No pupils speak English as an additional language.
- Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are taught in mixed-age classes.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action, school action plus and those with a statement of educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium (those known to be eligible for free school meals, in the care of the local authority or with a parent or carer in the armed services) is below the national average. There are no children from service families currently on roll.
- An executive headteacher was appointed in January of 2013, following the departure of the previous headteacher. The current headteacher took up his role in September 2013 following a period of time as acting headteacher during the last academic year.
- There have been a number of changes to the governing body including a new Chair of Governors.
- There is a privately run nursery on site which is subject to a separate inspection.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching to at least good by ensuring that:
 - teachers consistently use assessment information to set work at the right level for pupils' different abilities and needs, and to more clearly define the ways in which pupils, particularly the most able pupils and pupils supported through school action and school action plus, can succeed
 - teachers always provide pupils with precise guidance about how to improve their work and give them time to respond to teachers' comments
 - teachers provide pupils with more opportunities to write at length across subjects
 - all adults encourage pupils to gain the necessary skills, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, in order to be able to work on their own.
- Strengthen the effectiveness of leaders and managers by ensuring that:
 - leaders at all levels, including governors, use both progress and attainment information rigorously to identify gaps in learning for groups of pupils so that support can be put in place quickly particularly for pupils supported through school action, school action plus and pupil premium funding, as well as most able pupils
 - leaders judge teaching in relation to pupils' achievement over time so that pupils' attainment and progress particularly across Key Stage 1 improve
 - actions in whole-school development plans specify clear responsibilities and time deadlines, and indicate how the success of actions will be measured
 - targets for the performance management of staff are always specific and easy to measure.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because, over time, pupils do not make consistently good progress. They make typical progress in Reception and expected progress across Key Stage 1 classes. While progress across Key Stage 2 is sometimes good, progress in reading is more consistently good than in mathematics and writing.
- Children enter Reception with a wide range of skills. The majority enter with skills which are broadly in line with those typical for their age. A small but significant number enter with skills well below those typical, particularly in communication and language and sometimes in personal and social development. They enter Year 1 with skills which are broadly expected, but with skills in writing and mathematics which are sometimes below those expected. The number of pupils who left Reception having achieved a good level of development in 2013 was below the national average.
- Progress for Year 6 pupils across Key Stage 2 in 2013 fell to well below that of other pupils in the country, in writing and below others nationally in mathematics. Although progress across most Key Stage 2 classes in 2013 was good in mathematics and reading, some pupils in Years 6, 5 and 2 did not make enough progress, particularly in writing, but occasionally in mathematics.
- Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 fell from just below average to well below average in writing and mathematics and from above average to below average at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2013. Inspectors found that current Year 2 pupils are on track to attain in line with others nationally in reading but are behind their peers nationally in writing and particularly in mathematics, having left Reception with below expected starting points.
- In the check on phonics skills (pupils' ability to link letters to the sounds they make) pupils performed less well than others nationally in 2012 and 2013. Nevertheless, inspectors found that phonics teaching and pupils' phonic skills are improving, with pupils given regular opportunities to read in school and at home.
- Although rates of progress for pupils eligible for the pupil premium in 2013 were similar to that of their peers in both English and mathematics, there remain gaps in attainment between these pupils and their peers of up to four terms in both English and mathematics. Current Year 6 pupils supported through the pupil premium are on track to attain in line with their peers in reading and writing but are behind by about one term in mathematics.
- Progress for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is too variable. While some of these pupils make good progress, others do not, including those with a statement of special educational needs, and those supported through school action and school action plus.
- This variability in progress is because teachers do not always use information on pupils' progress and attainment to set work at the right level or provide them with clear enough ways of succeeding, and they are not always given enough opportunity to learn on their own.
- The most able pupils do not always make as much progress as they should, particularly in writing, because they are not challenged sufficiently well in lessons and are not always given enough opportunities to write at length.
- In 2012, attainment rose at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2, and Year 6 pupils made good progress across Key Stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics, with pupils who were at the school for at least two academic years at the end of Year 6 making outstanding progress from starting points which were above average. However, current school information indicates that while some pupils across different years have made good progress over time, particularly in reading, others have not. Work in pupils' books supports this view.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching is not yet consistently good because not all groups of pupils make the progress they are capable of.
- While most teachers make clear for pupils what it is they are learning and how they can be successful, teachers do not always use assessment information well enough to set work and 'steps-to-success' that are precise enough for the range of different abilities within classes. As a result, the most able pupils are not always challenged well and disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are not always well supported.
- The pace of learning in lessons is not consistently good. This is because teachers sometimes spend too long explaining tasks, pupils work on undemanding tasks or teachers and other adults do not encourage pupils with special educational needs, in particular, to learn by themselves.
- Where teaching is stronger, teachers have high expectations. They use accurate assessment information to build effectively on pupils' prior learning and actively involve pupils in their learning. For example, in a literacy lesson in Year 5, pupils made good progress because the teacher structured activities well so that pupils' skills were effectively developed. The teacher gave pupils clear ways in which they could be successful and both he and an additional adult encouraged learners of all abilities to work on their own and to use their imaginations.
- While teachers mark pupils' work regularly, sometimes correcting spelling and punctuation or providing praise and suggestions about how to improve, they do not always provide pupils with specific enough guidance about their next steps in learning. As a result, pupils are not always clear about what to do to improve their literacy or numeracy skills.
- Although pupils sometimes correct spelling mistakes or answer questions posed by their teacher in marked work, this is not typical. Pupils are not given enough opportunities to respond to comments in marked work by editing what they have written or by re-doing a calculation.
- Opportunities to write at length across subjects are not consistently good. While some teachers provide pupils with good opportunities to write at length about historical topics or as part of research, this is not always the case. As a result, the most able pupils, in particular, do not make as much progress as possible in writing.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils report that they feel safe at the school because they have friends and there are adults to talk to, when needed.
- Pupils say that they enjoy attending school, and attendance is now above average.
- Pupils understand about different forms of bullying, including verbal, physical, racist and cyber bullying, and they report that rare instances of bullying are handled well by the school.
- Almost all parents and carers who responded to the Parent View survey said that their children are happy, feel safe at the school and are well looked after. Individual parents commented on how happy their children were and the positive impact of the new headteacher.
- The vast majority of pupils have positive attitudes to learning so that they are able to make reasonable progress where teaching is not strong and good progress where it is better.
- Pupils are friendly and polite, demonstrating good social and moral development.
- Behaviour is not yet outstanding because pupils are not always given enough opportunities to develop the necessary skills to work on their own in their learning, and where teaching is at its weakest pupils become restless and engage in off-task chat.
- Leaders have introduced a new behaviour policy and have improved the way that incidents of behaviour are monitored. They support pupils who have specific behaviour difficulties well.
- They are beginning to analyse how consistently well staff manage pupils' behaviour and look closely at incidents to identify patterns or trends, so that appropriate actions can be taken.

The leadership and management require improvement

- Leadership and management are not yet good because leaders have not yet secured good progress for all groups of pupils at all key stages and in all subjects.
- While leaders have systems in place to monitor the progress of groups of pupils across Key Stages 1 and 2, they are less developed in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- While leaders track the progress of different groups of pupils, monitoring of attainment across the school does not include tracking of the standards that different groups of pupils reach. As a result leaders have not put in support or challenge quickly enough to ensure that gaps in attainment are closed or that all pupils achieve well.
- Differences between some pupils' progress and attainment mean that leaders promote equality of opportunity adequately rather than well. They do not tolerate discrimination of any kind.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage leader also has responsibility for literacy across the school. The leader who oversees the progress of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is only on site for three days a week. Although these leaders are now assisted by other staff, progress for groups of children in Reception and for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is not monitored as effectively as possible, although provision for children in Reception has improved since the school was last inspected.
- The local authority has offered some support to the school, particularly in the change in leadership and has enabled it to access a range of support to improve the quality of teaching, phonics and spelling. This has had some positive impact.
- While leaders' evaluations of how well they are doing are broadly accurate, their evaluation of teaching is not based on the achievement of pupils over time, and is overgenerous.
- Whole-school action plans identify appropriate priorities which are helping to move the school forward. However, plans do not clearly indicate which teaching staff will be responsible for actions, what the time deadlines are and how success will be measured.
- Leaders' monitoring of teaching is regular and helpful. It identifies accurately some key strengths and areas for development, which are used to provide relevant training for staff. The positive impact of this monitoring is evident in the improving quality of teaching.
- Performance management of staff is organised appropriately and salary progression clearly links with whether staff meet performance management targets. However, these targets are not always as clear and easy to measure as they need to be to ensure good achievement for pupils.
- The headteacher has worked hard to raise expectations and staff are fully committed to his vision. The teaching of phonics and the quality of teaching are improving, and pupils' behaviour is now good. Actions taken by the headteacher have not yet had time to impact fully on the quality of teaching and pupils' learning. Engagement with parents has improved with several commenting on how much they appreciate the headteacher's visibility and communication.
- Leaders ensure that pupils are safe and the site is secure. They have also allocated sports funding appropriately towards training play leaders and buying high quality sports materials.
- Good opportunities to participate in whole-school assemblies, and working together by taking part in team sports and clubs are helping to promote pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development.
- The governance of the school:
 - Changes to the governing body have helped it to become more involved in the work of the school and to offer improving support and challenge. Governors have a growing understanding of the school's performance data and how this compares with other schools, as a result of training. While they ask some searching questions, they do not receive enough information about the progress of groups of children in Reception or of the attainment of groups of pupils across the school to offer consistently effective challenge. As a result, they have not yet ensured that the pupil premium is making a positive difference, or how well disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are doing. They have set effective and challenging targets for the performance management of the headteacher, but do not know how challenging targets are for all staff.
 - They oversee finances effectively so that a former budget deficit has been eradicated. They have a clear idea about how underperformance is being tackled and recognise that the

information they receive has improved since the appointment of the new headteacher. They have ensured that a member of the senior leadership team is responsible for the allocation and monitoring of the sports funding. These recent actions have not yet made a measurable impact on pupils' health and well-being. Governors ensure safeguarding meets 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	114415
Local authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	429520

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	249
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Malcolm Welsh
Headteacher	Dave Evans
Date of previous school inspection	28–29 June 2012
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