

# Down Hall Primary School

Brooklyn Drive, Rayleigh, Essex, SS6 9LW

**Inspection dates** 27–28 November 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
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 good enough to ensure that all pupils achieve consistently well in writing and mathematics.
- Work is not always set at the right level to enable pupils to learn as well as they can and maintain their interest in lessons.
- Teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils might achieve and targets set for pupils are not always challenging enough to raise achievement.
- Agreed policies, for example in marking, are not consistently followed by all teachers.
- Leaders do not check the quality of teaching regularly enough or check achievement in each subject each term or in sufficient detail.
- Plans for improving pupils' achievement are not based on clear criteria that set out precisely how much progress and attainment need to improve. As a result, leaders are not able to determine whether their actions are bringing about the desired improvements.

### The school has the following strengths

- Progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Activities are well planned and encourage children to be curious about the world and want to explore and investigate it further.
- Attendance is above average and persistent absence is low.
- Behaviour and pupils' attitudes to learning are positive because there are good relationships between staff and pupils which motivates the pupils. Pupils feel safe in school and say that are well supported and enjoy their lessons.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed parts of 18 lessons.
- Meetings were held with the Chair of the Governing Body, the headteacher, deputy headteacher, pupils and a representative of the local authority. The inspectors also spoke with parents.
- Inspectors looked at the work in pupils' books and discussed it with them. They also listened to some pupils reading.
- The inspectors took into account the school's information about pupils' attainment and progress, its self-evaluation and plans for improvement. The inspectors also looked at a range of documents and policies concerning school management and keeping pupils safe.
- Inspectors took account of parents' views through the 91 parents who responded to the Parent View online survey, letters from parents and the school's own survey information of parental views. They also spoke informally to parents at the end of the school day.
- The views of staff were considered through the responses to an inspection questionnaire from 15 staff.

## Inspection team

Richard Blackmore, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Janet Tomkins	Additional Inspector
Florence Olajide	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- It has 11 classes organised into three Year 1/2 classes, three Year 3/4 classes, three Year 5/6 classes and two classes for Reception age children.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils entitled to support through the pupil premium (additional government funding for looked after pupils and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals) is below the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported by school action is above the national average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is broadly average.
- There have been a number of recent staff changes. In April 2013, a new special educational needs coordinator was appointed. In September 2013, three new teachers joined the school, along with a new deputy headteacher, who also teaches a class.
- 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?

- Increase the proportion of good and outstanding teaching by ensuring that:
    - agreed policies and approaches to teaching, especially marking, are consistently followed across the school
    - teachers always maintain a good pace to teaching and learning
    - lesson activities and targets are always well matched to pupils' learning needs, build on their prior learning and challenge them to go on to achieve higher standards.
  
  - Raise achievement, particularly in writing and mathematics, by ensuring that all staff:
    - show pupils clear examples of the steps to be taken when writing so that they are clear about what they have to do and what is expected of them
    - plan more opportunities for pupils to write at length across different subjects
    - provide mathematical activities that challenge pupils and develop their mathematical skills further, particularly through problem-solving tasks and investigations.
  
  - Improve the school's leadership by ensuring that leaders:
    - check teaching quality and pupil progress more regularly and effectively
    - make sure that the whole-school plans for improvement identify clearly the next steps to be taken and the criteria to be used to assess progress towards desired objectives
    - set targets for teachers that will ensure they lead to improvements in pupils' achievement
    - extend the skills of other teachers with leadership responsibilities so that they gain an overview of the quality of teaching in their areas and can lead developments within them more effectively.
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## Inspection judgements

### **The achievement of pupils** requires improvement

- Attainment at the end of Year 2 is only broadly average and pupils' progress, particularly over Key Stage 1, requires improvement. Too few pupils make quick progress by the time they leave, especially in writing and mathematics. This is despite children starting at the school with knowledge and skills which are close to those generally seen in children of this age.
- Achievement in writing is limited because pupils do not have high-quality writing illustrated clearly to them and do not have enough opportunities to complete extended pieces of writing in a wide range of subjects. In mathematics, pupils' problem-solving skills are sometimes underdeveloped or insufficiently reinforced in many of the activities set, and there is sometimes a lack of challenge in tasks.
- Recently, progress has been quickening across the school, matching the growing proportion of good teaching. Improving standards in reading, for example, reflect the school's much greater focus on developing pupils' early reading skills and developing effective teaching of letters and sounds (phonics) in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Children make good progress through the Early Years Foundation Stage in most areas of learning because teaching here is consistently good. Activities encourage children to be interested in the topics and activities they are given. This makes them want to explore and investigate further, and therefore to learn more.
- Pupils who are supported by the pupil premium generally make similar progress to their classmates and, on occasion, better progress. This is due to the effective use of the funding received. Additional support is provided in literacy and numeracy to make sure these pupils keep up with others in the school. There were too few of these pupils in Year 6 last year for their performance to be compared with that of their classmates without identifying individuals.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make at least the progress they should. Their progress is often good in literacy. This is due to the valuable support they receive from teaching and support staff, who work closely together both inside and outside lessons to plan appropriate activities and to ensure that pupils are motivated and keen to learn despite their difficulties.

### **The quality of teaching** requires improvement

- Teaching is variable in quality because agreed policies and strategies, such as marking, are not always consistently applied across the school. As a result, pupils tend to make expected but not good, progress.
- Teachers sometime plan work that is fully matched to pupils' different abilities but this is not always the case. There are occasions where pupils, who have already made too little progress, fall back further because they are given work to do that is too easy for them.
- Teachers provide learning targets for pupils in reading, writing and mathematics but these are not always demanding enough and teachers do not consistently make clear to pupils what they have to do to meet them or remind pupils to use them during lessons. This slows down the pace of learning.

- Despite providing appropriate opportunities for pupils to extend their reading skills across the curriculum, teachers do not build sufficient opportunities for pupils to similarly reinforce their writing in other subjects.
- Nonetheless, as a result of action taken by the headteacher and other senior leaders, teaching is improving. The proportion of good teaching is increasing and some is outstanding.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are well-taught. Teachers' assessments are careful and methodical, and teachers provide regular indoor and outdoor activities so that children can use their skills widely and extend them.
- Early reading skills are being developed well as a result of improvements to the school's approach to the teaching of phonics. Teachers teach phonics accurately across the school and most children confidently use their skills in breaking up words when they are reading independently.
- Teaching assistants provide effective support for lower-attaining pupils, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. These pupils benefit greatly from being taught in small groups, especially when the focus is on learning to read, and for younger pupils building up their knowledge of letters and sounds.
- Where teaching is outstanding, teachers plan activities which are sharply matched to pupils' abilities and skilled questioning is used to extend pupils' thinking. Clear explanations are given so that pupils know precisely what to do. This was seen in a Year 5/6 literacy lesson, where rapid progress was made by all pupils, who comfortably went on to meet their individual learning targets. Pupils were engrossed in their work and showed very high levels of concentration.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- Adults manage behaviour effectively and this maintains the calm, inclusive environment that the school has created. Only on very rare occasions is it the case that pupils' attitudes to learning in lessons are not completely positive.
- Pupils are polite and display good manners. They thoroughly enjoy learning and their lessons. One pupil, typical of many, said, 'Teachers make lessons fun so that we learn at the same time.'
- Pupils appreciate the school's reward systems and the reward assemblies, and support each other's contributions to the school community.
- Attendance is above average.
- Pupils have a good understanding of what constitutes bullying in its various forms. They are adamant that bullying is rare, which is confirmed by the school's records. They are also confident that, should bullying occur, they can rely on the support of adults.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in and around school. They know what dangers exist outside school and are very aware of how to keep safe and understand the potential hazards posed by misuse of the internet.
- Through lessons and assemblies, pupils are developing their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding well. For example, pupils are very willing to take on responsibilities, such as

taking part in the school council and raising money for charity.

## **The leadership and management** requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because not enough teaching is good and several staff are new and still developing their teaching and leadership roles. About half of the parents who responded to the Parent View online survey did not agree that the school is well led and managed.
- Leaders in charge of key subjects and other areas of the school's work have not had enough time to enable them to carry out their roles sufficiently well. They are only now beginning to check systematically on the quality of teaching in their subjects so that they can improve both this and pupils' achievement.
- The monitoring of teaching quality by middle leaders relies too heavily on brief observations to identify key strengths and weaknesses.
- Self-evaluation is accurate and honest. The school improvement plan is clear in its priorities and correctly identifies what should be done to improve. However, the milestones and other criteria used to determine whether enough progress is being made are not precise enough to do the job for which they are intended.
- Although systems for the performance management of staff are in place, teachers' targets are not sufficiently focused on raising achievement.
- Leaders have provided training to improve the quality of teaching and this has led to improvements being made. For example, the school's focus on the skills of phonics teaching has led to increased attainment in reading at the end of Key Stage 2.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well through the subjects taught. The school promotes its values and fosters pupils' understanding of different cultures and faiths. It does not tolerate any form of discrimination.
- Sports funding is used well to develop expertise in physical education. This has led to increases in pupils' skill levels in team games such as hockey and has also improved teachers' subject knowledge.
- The local authority has provided effective support, brokered help from another school and ensured that the school recognises that achievement is not high enough.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors are aware of the progress pupils make and what needs to be done to improve it. They are involved fully in the management of the headteacher's performance and the application of the national Teaching Standards. They ensure that teachers are only rewarded if there is evidence of their impact on pupils' achievement. Governors have a good awareness of how the pupil premium is used and are increasingly clear about the effectiveness of this funding because senior leaders provide them with detailed information on how well all groups of pupils are doing. Governors ensure that arrangements to safeguard pupils meet current 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	114936
<b>Local authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	425224

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	305
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Peter Milchard
<b>Headteacher</b>	Lou Reck
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	12 January 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	01268 780018
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