

Westfields Infant School

School Lane, Yately, Hampshire, GU46 6NN

Inspection dates 27–28 November 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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' progress in recent years has been uneven and pupils have not reached the standards they are capable of, particularly in writing and mathematics.
- Attainment by the end of Year 2 is average in writing and mathematics and these areas lag behind attainment in reading.
- Too few pupils attain the higher levels in writing and mathematics.
- Boys do less well in writing than girls. There are inconsistencies in handwriting and presentation.
- Teaching has not been strong enough to promote good progress for all groups, especially in writing and mathematics.
- Tasks are not always pitched correctly for the differing abilities of pupils, particularly for the most-able.
- In some lessons, the rate of learning is not quick enough.
- Learning resources and outdoor facilities in the Early Years Foundation Stage are limited.
- There are insufficient learning resources for practical mathematics and science.
- Some subject leaders are new to their posts and are not yet sufficiently well developed to play a full part in checking and improving their area of responsibility.

The school has the following strengths:

- The new headteacher has quickly and accurately assessed the school's strengths and the areas for improvement.
- Staff and governors welcome the headteacher's clear and determined direction to raise pupils' achievement and improve teaching.
- Pupils make good progress in reading and reach above average standards by the end of Year 2.
- Pupils show a keen interest in learning and behave well in lessons and around the school.
- Attendance levels have recently improved because of the action taken by the school.
- Pupils feel safe and very well cared for by all adults.
- The local authority is providing a good range of support to help the school improve.
- The school has built positive relationships with parents and carers who support the school well.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 22 lessons. Some of these were seen jointly with the headteacher.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, staff, a representative from the local authority, governors, parents and carers and pupils.
- The inspectors took account of the 49 responses to the online survey (Parent View).
- Pupils were heard to read and discussions were held with them about their reading.
- Questionnaires from 15 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
Robert Arnold	Additional Inspector
Judith Tinsley	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a large infant school.
- Most of the pupils are White British.
- 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 well below average.
- A well below 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 September 2013.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make teaching good or better in all classes so that all groups of pupils make consistently good progress, particularly in writing and mathematics, by:
 - ensuring that teachers always set tasks at the right level of difficulty for individual pupils, particularly the most-able.
 - making sure that learning in all lessons moves on at a good pace
 - establishing a common approach to the teaching of handwriting and how pupils are expected to present their work
 - finding interesting and imaginative ideas to inspire boys to write
 - improving the outdoor learning environment in the Early Years Foundation Stage
 - extending learning resources for practical mathematics and science.
- Strengthen leadership and management by:
 - providing planned support and training for new subject leaders so that they can play a full part in checking and improving their area of responsibility.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because pupils' progress has been too uneven in recent years. As a result, pupils have not always reached the standards they are capable of by the end of Year 2, particularly in writing and mathematics.
- Children begin in Reception with knowledge, understanding and skills at broadly expected levels for their age. There is not enough good teaching to promote good progress. Weaknesses in outdoor learning opportunities and the insufficient opportunities to write hinder children's progress. Children make good progress in their personal and social development.
- During the past three years, attainment by the end of Year 2 has been average in writing and mathematics, while in reading it has been above average. The most-able have not been given work that is appropriate to their needs in writing and mathematics and therefore too few have attained the higher than expected Level 3. Pupils' investigative and problem-solving skills in mathematics are hindered by a lack of good quality practical learning resources.
- Pupils write for different audiences and purposes. However, there are inconsistencies in the quality of pupils' handwriting and in the way they present their work. In the past few years, boys have performed less well than the girls in writing. This gender gap is wider than the difference between boys and girls nationally. While there are some good examples of teachers using approaches to inspire boys to write, these are not consistent across the school.
- The new headteacher and staff are taking positive steps to raise pupils' achievement, especially in writing and mathematics but pupils' progress is not yet consistently good in all classes.
- Pupils make good progress in reading, and attainment by the end of Year 2 is above average. An above average proportion of pupils reach the higher levels in reading.
- In a successful reading session in Year 2, pupils made good progress in consolidating their phonics skills (letters and the sounds they make). The teacher swiftly moved them on to more complex sounds like 'tious' and 'tion'. Pupils identified words with the sounds such as attention, celebration and decoration. Pupils used their reading skills well in finding useful facts about polar animals from a range of texts.
- The progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is improving because activities and support are more carefully matched to pupils' needs.
- In 2013, Year 2 pupils supported by the pupil premium attained lower standards in reading, writing and mathematics than the others. Assessment, provision and support for these pupils have improved recently and this is having a positive impact on their progress.
- Pupils are developing healthy lifestyles and physical fitness through physical education lessons and a range of additional sporting activities, some of which are being provided through the sports funding.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching has not been good enough over time to ensure that all groups of pupils make good progress, especially in writing and mathematics.
- In all year groups, teachers do not always plan tasks at the right level of difficulty for different groups. In particular, the work is not sufficiently demanding to fully extend the most-able.
- The pace of learning declines when teachers spend too long introducing a task resulting in pupils spending too much time listening to the teacher rather than being actively involved in their learning. For example, in some lessons all pupils, regardless of their ability, spend time consolidating learning that is already secure.
- Equipment and facilities for outdoor learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage are limited and this hinders children's creativity and physical development. There are clear plans to improve this situation.

- There are some weaknesses in practical apparatus for mathematics and science and this hampers the development of pupils' investigative and problem-solving skills. Leaders have identified these as areas for improvement.
- There is not a consistent approach to the teaching of handwriting and how pupils are expected to present their work. As a result, some pupils have poorly formed letters and untidy presentation. There are insufficient opportunities in Reception for children to develop early writing skills.
- There are signs that teaching is improving because of the action taken by the new headteacher and new leadership team. Teachers effectively share the purpose of the lesson with the class and so pupils understand what they are expected to learn. Pupils are provided with clear guidance and indicators to help them succeed in their learning.
- Teachers create a positive classroom climate for learning. Relationships between adults and pupils are strong. As a result, pupils learn well with other pupils, in pairs or in small groups.
- Within the school there are some good examples in the teaching of writing. In a successful Year 1 lesson, pupils made good progress in writing their own version of 'The Three Bears'. They were inspired and motivated to try hard by the teacher's enthusiastic approach. They benefited from the teacher's clear demonstrations of how to create interesting sentences. Pupils used adjectives and adventurous vocabulary in creating their story.
- The teaching of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is improving. Pupils usually receive good guidance and support from teaching assistants.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Children in Reception settle well into school and daily routines. They enjoy their learning and form good relationships with adults and other children. Children in Reception made good progress in their personal and social development. They are well behaved.
- In Years 1 and 2, pupils show a keen interest in their learning and participate well in the activities provided. Pupils' enthusiasm for learning is reflected by their comments which included, 'I like writing stories', 'I like painting and art club' and 'I enjoy maths each morning'.
- In a few lessons when the teaching was engaging and inspirational, pupils' attitudes to learning and their behaviour were exceptional. Occasionally, pupils' attitudes to learning and their behaviour are less positive when teaching is not sufficiently challenging and engaging.
- Behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. The school's records of incidents show that behaviour is typically good over time and that effective steps are taken to deal with any unacceptable behaviour. Pupils are friendly, polite and hospitable to visitors. They show consideration and respect to adults and other pupils.
- All the pupils spoken to stressed that they were safe at school and very well looked after by adults. The inspection findings support these viewpoints.
- Pupils show a good understanding of bullying and the different forms it can take, including name calling and physical bullying. They correctly stated that bullying is 'being mean and never stopping'. They say that their teachers and other staff are very helpful and supportive. Pupils are confident that any inappropriate behaviour, including bullying, would be swiftly dealt with.
- Attendance has improved recently because of the positive action taken by the school and has risen from below to above average.
- Parents and carers who responded to the online survey, Parent View, strongly agreed that their children are happy, feel safe and are well looked after at school. They also indicated considerable satisfaction in the way that the school makes sure that pupils are well behaved. The inspection findings reflect the parents' and carers' positive views about behaviour and safety.

The leadership and management require improvement

- Leaders and managers over the past few years have not been fully effective in promoting good achievement for pupils in writing and mathematics. There has also been considerable variation in the quality of teaching.
- While the inspection team has found positive signs of improvement, actions initiated by the new headteacher are too recent to have had a full impact on pupils' achievement and teaching. Some plans such as the training of staff have yet to be implemented. The deputy headteacher provides good support in improving the school but some other key subject leaders are new to their post and have not yet had the coaching and training that will enable them to make a full contribution to checking and improving their area of responsibility.
- The new headteacher has quickly gained an accurate picture of the school's performance through careful analysis of pupils' achievement data and the observation of teaching and learning. Her findings have been effectively reported to staff and to the governing body. There are clear and robust plans of action to tackle the most pressing improvement priorities, especially strengthening teaching.
- The new headteacher's determination and vision to raise pupils' achievement and to improve teaching are shared and welcomed by staff and governors. She has quickly gained the confidence and respect of the school community. Staff commented: 'The management team now have a clear understanding of how the school staff can improve and have communicated this effectively to the staff' and 'We know the direction we are going and have an action plan to get there.' Pupils described their headteacher as 'awesome' and felt that she was doing a good job.
- The new leadership team is rightly placing much emphasis on checking and developing teaching. Clear procedures for appraisal of the performance of staff have been introduced. Targets to improve teachers' practice and 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 curriculum provides an appropriate range of subjects and topics. Pupils enjoy the good range of additional activities, such as sports clubs and educational visits. Positive action is being taken to strengthen learning opportunities in writing and mathematics. The use of the sports grant is well planned with an emphasis on using external specialists to coach and train the school staff.
- The pupil premium funding is being properly used to provide eligible pupils with additional support. Improved provision for the pupils supported by the premium is having a positive impact on their progress.
- The school promotes equality of opportunity. It is a positive and welcoming place for pupils to learn and develop. All pupils are valued and there are no signs of discrimination.
- The local authority has an accurate and very clear overview of the school's performance. The local authority has provided effective guidance to the governing body on the appointment of the headteacher. The school is making good use of local authority advisers and consultants in English, mathematics and early years education to move the school forward.

The governance of the school:

- With the appointment of the new headteacher, members of the governing body now have an accurate and realistic view of the school's performance, especially pupils' attainment and progress in writing and mathematics. They are fully aware that the school requires improvement. This clear overview is enabling the governing body to ask challenging questions as well as maintaining their good support. Governors receive accurate information about the quality of teaching from the headteacher. They understand the requirements relating to the management of staff performance and the importance of promotion and salary increases being linked to pupils' progress. Governors ensure that pupil premium funding is properly spent and are checking the impact on pupils' progress. They have attended a range of courses to enhance their effectiveness. All safeguarding requirements are met.

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	115994
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	426589

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	254
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sheila Turl
Headteacher	Janette Teague
Date of previous school inspection	October 2008
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