

Patcham Junior School

Ladies Mile Road, Patcham, Brighton, BN1 8TA

Inspection dates 21–22 November 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching		Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school with serious weaknesses.

- For several years pupils have not made sufficient progress in developing skills in reading, writing and mathematics because the teaching has not been effective.
- Teaching is inadequate because too many pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs and pupils in receipt of pupil premium funding, have not achieved their potential.
- In too many lessons, there are insufficiently high expectations and levels of challenge, including for more-able pupils. Teachers plan many activities, but do not take enough account of the quality of learning that should be taking place.
- Teachers do not engage pupils sufficiently in learning. Sometimes this is because their explanations are too long to the whole class.
- Pupils' work is not always marked regularly. Sometimes errors are not corrected, and there is insufficient guidance on how precisely pupils should improve their work.
- Sometimes there is insufficient support in lessons for lower-attaining pupils.
- Expectations of how pupils present their work are not high enough, and therefore too few pupils take sufficient pride in its presentation.
- The school has only recently begun to address its weaknesses and issues from the previous inspection in a systematic way. Consequently, issues from the previous inspection remain to be tackled fully.

The school has the following strengths:

- Many pupils attain at levels above or well above the national average.
- Leaders and governors understand the school's weaknesses and have introduced several improvement measures. These show that the school has the capacity to improve further and meet more challenging targets.
- Attendance is above average, pupils enjoy coming to school, they behave well most of the time and they feel very safe and well cared for.
- The checks on classroom practice are now more regular, and are beginning to improve teaching.
- Parents and carers are very positive about the school.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 20 lessons, taught by 15 teachers. Seven of the observations were carried out jointly with members of the senior leadership team.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, other staff, two governors and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspection team took account of 136 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and 25 questionnaires returned by staff.
- The inspection team observed the school's work and scrutinised a variety of documentation, including the school's evaluation of itself, the school improvement plan, governing body minutes, data on pupils' current progress and records relating to safeguarding. Inspectors also scrutinised pupils' work in books.

Inspection team

John Laver, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Christine Bennett

Additional Inspector

Wendy Forbes

Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The great majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is very low.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children in the care of the local authority and other groups) is well below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is almost twice the national average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is just below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school is three-form entry.
- The school leadership has very recently been restructured following the appointment of two senior members of staff. The current headteacher has been in post for just over one year.
- The school runs a breakfast club before school.
- The school holds the Artsmark Gold and ActiveMark awards.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching to be at least good in order to improve pupils' achievement by:
 - encouraging teachers to inject more challenge into lessons and provide more opportunities for pupils to learn away from the teacher, particularly to boost the learning of more-able pupils and keep all pupils fully engaged
 - making sure that teachers take account of the learning needs of all pupils when planning a range of activities
 - ensuring that when teachers mark pupils' work, it is done regularly and gives very specific advice on how they can improve their work
 - having high expectations of the presentation of pupils' work and what they can achieve in their writing
 - providing sufficient opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematical skills to real-life and problem-solving situations.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership at all levels, in order to boost learning and raise achievement, by:
 - building on existing strategies to support the needs of pupils in receipt of pupil premium funding and those with special educational needs, in order to further reduce the gap between these pupils and others in the school

- ensuring that lower-attainers, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs always get the high-quality support they need in order to boost their acquisition of basic skills
- ensuring more consistency in teachers' planning, use of resources and approaches to learning between classes in the same year groups, so that all pupils can benefit from the best opportunities to make progress
- providing teachers with more opportunities to observe and share best classroom practice with each other.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is inadequate

- Pupils' progress in all subjects has been inadequate for too long, so that many pupils are not as well prepared as they should be for the next stage of their education.
- Pupils join the school with skills and levels of knowledge above, and sometimes well above, expectations for their age. Although pupils typically leave the school at the age of 11 with above (or sometimes well above) average standards, the progress of all groups of pupils over the previous three years has been inadequate, with too many pupils of all groups of ability failing to make the expected levels of progress.
- Observation of lessons during the inspection, alongside analysis of the school's assessment and tracking data and scrutiny of pupils' work, demonstrates some recent improvement. Variations in performance between boys and girls and between different groups of pupils and classes are narrowing. However, the rate of achievement is still very variable, mainly because the strategies to improve teaching and to provide additional support for particular pupils are mostly at a relatively early stage.
- Pupils in receipt of pupil premium funding, mostly those who are known to be eligible for free school meals, have been part of the general underachievement. In the most recent validated assessments for Year 6, the attainment of these few pupils in that year group was behind that of other pupils in the school in both English and mathematics by more than a term. The gaps in attainment and progress have begun to narrow overall. However, the rate at which pupils eligible for free school meals make progress, both in English and mathematics, and in comparison to other pupils in the school, still varies considerably between classes and year groups. Therefore, although some of these pupils are making better progress in lessons and are in line to meet longer-term targets, others are not.
- Similarly, there is evidence that some disabled pupils and those with special educational needs have recently begun making good progress. However, this is not consistent.
- More-able pupils leave the school with above average attainment, but several of these pupils do not attain the highest levels in English and mathematics together and do not achieve well enough in individual lessons.
- There are too few opportunities for pupils to learn more independently, away from the teachers' direct control, and sometimes their concentration wavers, to the detriment of their learning.
- Achievement in writing is considerably weaker than it should be. There are opportunities missed to develop better quality, in-depth writing for older pupils.
- Learning is adversely affected when pupils are not given appropriate tasks. Pupils confirmed to inspectors that sometimes work is too easy. For example, lesson observations showed that in mathematics, more-able pupils are given too many basic numeracy tasks that do not move their learning on, and there are limited opportunities to use and develop mathematical skills in appropriate depth in various subjects. Consequently, pupils' ability to apply their skills to real-life situations or problem-solving tasks is underdeveloped.
- Because the school is now making a more concerted effort to address these issues, parents and carers believe that their children make good progress. However, although more pupils are now making progress at a similar rate to pupils nationally, and more are on track to meet appropriate targets, there is still too much variability, and too few pupils make good progress.

The quality of teaching

is inadequate

- There is not enough good teaching and not enough of the best practice spread throughout the school, which is why progress over time has been inadequate.
- For a long period of time teaching has been typically inadequate, because it has not focused

enough on the learning needs of all pupils. This includes more-able pupils, and pupils who are potentially vulnerable to underachieving, such as disabled pupils and those with special educational needs and those in receipt of pupil premium funding.

- Teachers' expectations are not high enough. Opportunities are missed to get pupils working in a more challenging and engaging way away from the teacher's direct control, and earlier in the lesson.
- Although teachers are conscientious in planning a series of activities linked to learning objectives, the planning is not sufficiently coordinated. The result is that pupils in some classes, sometimes within the same year group, do not get as effective and engaging learning opportunities as others.
- Marking is very variable in quality. Some work is not marked regularly or is done sketchily, whereas some is marked very conscientiously. Where teachers make extensive comments in pupils' books, they are usually not precise enough to show pupils exactly how they can improve their work to the next level. Pupils are not made to follow up on the comments regularly.
- The leadership has developed precise systems of tracking and assessing pupils' progress, but teachers do not use the resulting targets enough in lessons to help pupils improve on an everyday basis. Some pupils are not very aware of how their targets can help their learning.
- Teachers are too tolerant of scrappy presentation in pupils' work.
- The overall quality of teaching has begun to improve, particularly during the last year, partly because teachers now get more support and opportunities for professional development. Their skills in questioning have improved. Also, learning support assistants are targeting underachieving pupils more effectively in some classes.
- Teachers are now held more responsible for pupils' progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils require improvement

- Most parents, carers and pupils believe that behaviour is good, which is the case in most lessons.
- However, because activities in lessons are not always engaging or interesting enough, some pupils lose their focus and concentration, which slows the pace of learning. Attitudes to learning are mostly positive, but not consistently so to ensure good learning for all pupils and the progress of which all pupils are capable. Therefore behaviour for learning requires improvement.
- This loss of pupils' focus was also evident, for example, in an assembly observed during the inspection.
- Behaviour around the school is good, reflected in the fact that there have been no exclusions in recent times.
- Pupils understand different types of bullying and can talk knowledgeably about them, but do not regard bullying as an important issue in the school. Pupils feel very safe and well cared for, getting a lot of support for their well-being. This contributes to the fact that pupils enjoy school and attendance is above average.
- Pupils enjoy taking on responsibility, such as raising money for charity, serving on the school council and helping pupils younger than themselves.

The leadership and management require improvement

- Leadership requires improvement, because it has not yet fully addressed the inadequacies in

achievement and teaching which have been a feature of the school in recent years. The improvements being made, the determination to drive up progress and the fact that the leadership has the support of all staff and the great majority of parents, demonstrate that the school does have the capacity to improve.

- The school has only partially addressed an issue from the previous inspection about ensuring that the checking of teaching should be more closely linked to specific learning outcomes. Some staff below senior leadership level such as heads of year are now more engaged in checking progress in particular year groups. However, because there are still inconsistencies in areas such as planning, outcomes remain too variable, and teachers do not have enough opportunities to share best practice.
- The headteacher has been in post for just over a year, and other senior leaders have joined the school even more recently. The very new leadership team has a good understanding of the school's need to improve considerably, and planning for improvement is geared to the right priorities. The school's evaluation of itself reflects recent improvements, although its assessment of the rate of progress is over-optimistic.
- There are many strategies now in place to address weaknesses, for example measures such as more resources and different approaches to engaging boys more in reading, and more strategies to improve progress in mathematics. There is also more individual and small-group support for pupils who are underachieving or have particular learning difficulties. Many of these strategies are showing some positive results, but are not yet embedded across the whole school. This is also true of the provision of extra support for pupils in receipt of pupil premium funding.
- The school is developing a curriculum intended to link subjects through topics and fully engage pupils' interests. This is proving a success in some areas, but there is sometimes insufficient rigour in the expectations of what pupils can achieve, particularly when doing written work.
- There is an extensive programme of enrichment activities, with strengths in areas such as music and sport, as reflected in the school's Artsmark Gold and ActiveMark awards. The school takes advantage of its links with local schools, for example to use their sports facilities and increasingly to provide more opportunities for staff to liaise with colleagues elsewhere. There are specialist teachers for some subjects like music.
- There is good provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, The school works hard to raise awareness of different cultures and beliefs, as reflected in display work and topics seen in lessons during the inspection, for example when pupils discussed, 'What makes a good community?'
- The school is making good use of primary sports funding to develop more expertise in teaching physical education and raising awareness of healthy lifestyles. This is reflected in a high participation rate in school sports clubs and activities. The breakfast club provides an enjoyable and healthy start to the school day for several pupils.
- The school meets safeguarding requirements. A high priority is given to teaching pupils to be safe and also giving relevant safety information to parents and carers.
- The local authority has been working closely with the school since the current headteacher joined the school. It has supported several developments to improve provision and progress and continues to plan further support, for example for the mentoring of new staff with responsibilities.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance has improved since the previous inspection. The reconstructed governing body understands the need for improvement, particularly in the key areas of progress and achievement, because it has more appreciation than before of how progress compares with the national picture. Governors recognise some of the variations in the quality of teaching. Governors have a good understanding of the performance of various groups such as those in receipt of pupil premium funding. They play a key role in the management of staff performance, supporting the current leadership in now ensuring that staff pay is linked to accountability and progress. Governors are enthusiastic about the strategies for improvement, but recognise the need to embed them further. They have been confident in getting the leadership to explain the school's performance and challenging it to justify the improvement

measures adopted, since they are very aware of their role both in supporting the school and holding the leadership to account.

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	114372
Local authority	Brighton and Hove
Inspection number	426581

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	369
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Danny Simpson
Headteacher	Ashley Seymour-Williams
Date of previous school inspection	1–2 October 2008
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