

Dunton Green Primary School

London Road, Dunton Green, Sevenoaks, TN13 2UR

Inspection dates 11–12 December 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		Requires improvement	3
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

- Achievement requires improvement because pupils do not make rapid enough progress. Standards by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are below average and have declined over the past three years.
- Teaching is not consistently good because expectations are too low in some classes and work is not always pitched at the right level so that some pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- Pupils' behaviour can hinder their progress in some lessons, especially when teaching lacks challenge and motivation and fails to capture their interest.
- Too often, teachers have to spend too much time managing behaviour at the expense of moving learning forward at a rapid pace.
- Marking does not always give pupils the information they need to improve their work.
- Arrangement for training and development of teachers are not always well targeted to meet individual needs or whole-school priorities.
- Targets set for teachers are not tightly focused on improvements for pupils' progress.

The school has the following strengths

- The Early Years Foundation Stage has improved since the previous inspection. Children are taught well and make good progress.
- Pupils' achievement in writing has improved year on year in Key Stage 2.
- Leadership capacity has been enhanced with the appointment of the new deputy headteacher and new appointments to the governing body.
- Most parents feel that their children are happy at school, feel safe and are well looked after.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed substantial parts of 16 lessons and many of these were joint observations with the deputy headteacher. In addition, inspectors talked to pupils about their work, looked at work books and listened to pupils from Year 2 and Year 6 read.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and deputy headteacher, other staff with key leadership responsibilities, groups of pupils, governors and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of documentation including the school's own check on its performance, the school improvement plan, records of the school's checks on the quality of teaching, information on pupils' progress and documents relating to safeguarding.
- Inspectors took account of 45 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and spoke to some parents at the end of the day. They also looked at seven questionnaires returned by staff.

Inspection team

Margaret Coussins, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Juliet Ward

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is above average. The proportion supported by school action plus or with a statement is below average.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives additional funding (the pupil premium) which is additional funding for those known to be eligible for free school meals, are in the care of the local authority or are children from service families, is below average. There are currently no pupils in the care of the local authority or from service families.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The school makes provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage in a Reception class.
- The school provides a daily breakfast club.
- There is a Nursery on the same site but this is managed by a private provider and not included in this inspection.
- The deputy headteacher was appointed in February 2013.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better in order to raise standards and achievement by:
 - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils of all abilities can achieve
 - making sure teachers plan work which meets pupils' different learning needs, especially to provide greater challenge for the most able pupils
 - ensure that marking and feedback help pupils to understand the next steps they need to take to improve their work
 - ensuring that all lessons engage and motivate pupils so that they stay on task and behave well and teaching and learning time is not lost.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that training is well targeted to improve individual teachers' skills as well as meeting the school's priorities for improvement
 - making sure that the targets set from the checks on teachers' performance are tightly linked to improving pupils' progress and attainment.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement across the school requires improvement because overall standards have declined over the past three years and pupils do not make rapid enough progress from their starting points.
- In the 2013 tests and assessments, attainment at the end of Year 2 was broadly average in reading and mathematics but below average in writing. By the end of Year 6, attainment in mathematics dipped considerably to average levels, and standards in reading were below average.
- Standards in writing, however, improved and were above average. Pupils have increasing opportunities to write for a range of reasons in different styles and lots of good quality writing is displayed around the school.
- For some time, the school has provided group teaching for the most able pupils in Years 5 and 6 in mathematics. As a result, the proportion of pupils who reach the higher Level 6 in mathematics has been well above average. The school has recently taken steps to accelerate the progress of average and least able pupils in Years 5 and 6 by teaching in ability groups, particularly to develop problem-solving skills, which were identified as a weaker area in mathematics.
- Lesson observations and pupils' current work shows that they are beginning to make faster progress in some classes but this is not consistent across the school.
- Children start at school in the Reception Year with skills and knowledge that are in line with expectations for their age. They make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage because they are well taught and by the time they start in Year 1, the proportion reaching a good level of development is similar to that found nationally.
- In the 2012 phonics screening check (linking sounds and letters), the proportion of pupils in Year 1 reaching the expected standard was below average. In 2013, the proportion increased to above average as a result of more rigorous monitoring of the quality of phonics teaching. Reading is a key focus for the school and, as a result, pupils have an increasing enjoyment of reading and are making better progress in developing their understanding skills, which was an aspect of reading that was holding them back.
- In the 2012 national tests, the attainment of the few pupils in Year 6 who received support funded by the pupil premium was eight months behind that of their classmates in English and over 18 months behind in mathematics, although they did better than similar pupils nationally. In 2013 the gap narrowed slightly compared to their classmates in mathematics and they did better than similar pupils nationally in mathematics and writing.
- The school's records show that the progress of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is similar that of to their peers, which means that some make good progress, but this is inconsistent across the school. Additional support is effective when pupils work with individual or small group support with teaching assistants who mostly ensure that their needs are well met.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because of inconsistencies in its quality across the school. As a result, pupils do not always make good progress. Over time, teaching has not been consistently good enough to ensure that all pupils achieve well in English and mathematics.
- Teachers do not always have high enough expectations for pupils' achievement in lessons and this can hinder the progress for pupils of all abilities. In some subjects other than English and mathematics, teachers often rely too heavily on the use of worksheets, which tends to limit

pupils' learning.

- Work is sometimes not matched closely enough to meet the different learning needs of pupils and there is insufficient challenge in some lessons, particularly for the most able pupils.
- There are some good examples of marking and feedback; however, not all teachers ensure that pupils have clear pointers evaluating their own progress and improving their work. Marking is stronger in writing than it is in mathematics.
- Pupils generally have positive attitudes to learning and are keen to do well. Occasionally, however, when lessons do not capture their interest and enthusiasm, teachers' strategies to maintain good behaviour are less effective, behaviour drops and pupils' enjoyment and achievement in learning suffers.
- Stronger teaching was seen when pupils were engaged in their learning with enthusiasm and made good progress. For example, pupils in Year 4 investigated strategies for multiplication, and had good opportunities to work together and support others' learning, which motivated them and kept them on task. Teaching skilfully supported pupils' learning by encouraging them to explain the strategies they were using, which helped to move learning on at a good pace.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught well. There are good relationships between adults and children, and children are provided with exciting, interesting activities inside and outside, with a good balance between those directed by adults and those chosen by children. Teachers encourage children's independence and children enjoy learning.
- This year, teachers have renewed their focus on guided reading groups to develop pupils' understanding skills in reading as this was an area that held back pupils' achievement last year. Pupils in Year 5, for example, made good progress in reading between the lines of a text to increase their depth of understanding of characters, settings and the author's intent because of the teacher's good questioning skills and a good focus on developing pupils' social, moral and cultural awareness through the text.
- Teaching assistants generally contribute well to pupils' learning by supporting individuals or groups. They are well trained in providing specific support when supporting disabled pupils and those with special educational needs and other vulnerable groups or individuals. In some lessons, their impact on learning is less effective.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

require improvement

- Behaviour and safety require improvement because, although pupils in Key Stage 2 behave well overall and demonstrate good attitudes to learning, some pupils, often but not exclusively the younger pupils in Key Stage 1, do not behave appropriately in lessons. This is partly due to weaker teaching that does not fully engage and motivate pupils and as a result pupils often become inattentive and distracted, which hampers their learning.
- Some teachers do not have effective ways of managing pupils' behaviour and spend too much time managing behaviour rather than teaching.
- Pupils say they feel safe and secure in school. Most parents who responded to the online survey agree that their children are happy at school, feel safe and are well looked after.
- Pupils say there is no bullying in school but that a few pupils do not always behave well and there is sometimes rough behaviour in the playground. They understand that bullying can take different forms such as name calling, and physical, emotional and cyber bullying and are confident to turn to staff should any problems arise.
- Pupils are very friendly and welcoming and keen to talk about their school. The majority of them are well mannered and courteous to visitors and each other.
- Attendance is average and pupils enjoy coming to school. The breakfast club is appreciated by working parents. There is a limited range of activities available to pupils who attend.

The leadership and management

require improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because there has been a decline in pupils' achievement over the past three years at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 and the good achievement and teaching reported at the previous inspection have not been maintained.
- Senior leaders and governors have not acted rapidly or rigorously enough over time to stem the decline. However, the recently appointed deputy headteacher has added capacity to the team, and leaders, including the governing body, are determined to raise the school's performance to its previous good levels.
- Effective evaluation and monitoring are conducted by senior leaders and inform the school's development priorities. However, not all subject leaders are involved sufficiently in monitoring and some middle leadership roles are developing.
- Training opportunities and expectations are not always precisely enough linked to individual staff needs as well as whole-school priorities to forge more rapid improvement.
- There are regular checks on teachers' performance but the targets set as a result of this process are not always tightly or effectively linked to improving pupils' achievement.
- Some inadequate teaching has been eradicated and the school's tracking information shows that pupils are currently making more rapid progress and are on track for better achievement in 2014. Checks on pupils' progress are more frequently undertaken to enable leaders to identify where additional support needs to be targeted. The school has acted effectively to improve the provision and outcomes for children in the Reception class since the previous inspection report, and leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. These improvements demonstrate the school's capacity for further improvement.
- The school offers a broad and balanced range of subjects, with additional opportunities, including a wide range of musical tuition, sports and a wealth of visits to support learning. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted adequately through the curriculum and the school's values. Staff discourage any type of discrimination and seek to promote equal opportunities for all but know that not all pupils are achieving as well as they could do.
- The school provides a caring environment for pupils. The creative spending of the pupil premium funding is partly used to ensure all pupils, particularly those who may be vulnerable and their families, have access to the opportunities offered by the school.
- The new sports funding is building on existing provision to benefit pupils' health and well-being in the longer term and plans are in place to evaluate the impact.
- Parents who responded to the online survey as well as those spoken to are positive about most aspects of the school's work. However, around a third of those parents are not confident that the school is led and managed well.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements and ensure that pupils feel safe in school.
- The school has taken up some support and training offered by the local authority which plans to challenge the school on its performance information and support it as it makes the required improvements.
- **The governance of the school:**

The governing body is committed to the school and the drive for improvement and has the skills and expertise to review and develop the rigour of its work. A new Chair and other new governors have strengthened the governing body and increased the effectiveness of its impact in holding the school to account for its performance. Governors have a clear understanding of how well the school is performing in relation to schools nationally. They are increasing the range of their own monitoring procedures to enable them to know the school's strengths and areas to improve. They attend training provided by the local authority. Governors are aware that the quality of teaching and pupils' progress are linked to pay and promotion through performance management procedures. The governing body knows how the school uses the pupil premium funding and additional sports funding to make a difference to pupils' attainment and progress. Statutory duties, including safeguarding requirements, are met. There are some tensions between the headteacher and the governing body that need to be resolved so that the school can present a united front to parents to regain their confidence in the leadership

and management of the school.

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	118272
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	428858

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	181
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mark Cotman
Headteacher	Christine Barton
Date of previous school inspection	19–20 May 2009
Telephone number	01732 462221
Fax number	01732 743263
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