

Whytemead First School

Dominion Road, Worthing, BN14 8LH

Inspection dates 5–6 December 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Standards at the end of Year 2 have risen steadily over the last four years, particularly in reading and writing, and are now above average.
- Pupils' progress, including that of more able pupils, has been good over the last three years, particularly in reading.
- Pupils supported by pupil premium funding now make consistently good progress as a result of effective action taken by the school.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress in developing their early learning as a result of high-quality teaching.
- Pupils enjoy school and feel safe. Behaviour and attitudes to learning are good.
- Teaching is mostly good, with some that is outstanding.
- Provision for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, and the progress they make, are good.
- Governors, senior leaders and managers have been successful in securing improvements in teaching and achievement. There is good capacity to improve further.
- Governors are confident in challenging school leaders in relation to standards and pupils' progress.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers' management of groups during lessons is not always effective. As a result, not all pupils make sufficient progress in these lessons.
- Expectations of the quality and presentation of pupils' written work are not high enough.
- Pupils are not given the opportunity to learn how to join their writing. This disadvantages pupils in their subsequent education.
- Despite recent improvements in marking, the amount of guidance given to pupils on how to improve their work is inconsistent. Pupils have limited opportunities to respond to teachers' marking of their work.
- Leaders and managers do not always respond to weaker practice with sufficient urgency.
- Recently trained middle leaders have not yet had sufficient time to tackle identified weaknesses.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 25 lessons, 12 of which were seen together with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with a parent, a group of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and two other governors, the school's senior and subject leaders and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 68 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View).
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of school documentation, including records of school checks on the quality of teaching, the school improvement plan and records relating to behaviour, attendance, safeguarding and the tracking of pupils' progress. They also looked closely at pupils' written work from the current and previous school years, and listened to pupils reading.

Inspection team

George Logan, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Christine Bennett

Additional inspector

Keith Homewood

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Whytemead First School is a larger-than-average-sized first school.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also below average.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium (additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, those looked after by the local authority and children with parents serving in the armed forces) is slightly below average.
- There are two classes in Reception and Year 3. There are, exceptionally, three classes in Years 1 and 2, reflecting increased demand for school places locally.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching from good to outstanding by:
 - ensuring more effective supervision of all groups so that pupils make better progress
 - setting higher expectations for the presentation and quality of pupils' written work
 - fully implementing the school's marking policy, so that when work is marked, pupils have a clear view of what they need to do to improve and opportunities are planned for pupils to respond to marking
 - making better arrangements for the teaching of handwriting, so that pupils have the opportunity to develop a more fluent style of joined-up writing.
- Improve leadership and management and accelerate the pace of change by ensuring that:
 - weaker aspects of performance are identified and tackled without delay
 - the scrutiny of pupils' written work is more rigorous
 - the impact of recently appointed middle leaders is increased.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Teacher assessment at the end of Year 2 indicates that standards were above national levels in 2013. They have risen steadily over the last four years. However, significantly more pupils reached the higher Level 3 in reading and writing in 2013 than in mathematics. Provision in mathematics has been a continuing area for development and the school can demonstrate more rapid progress in the current year.
- Pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics in Years 1 and 2 is mostly good. It is currently more rapid in Year 2 than in Year 1. Progress in reading has improved as a result of comprehensive staff training in teaching phonics.
- Standards at the end of Year 3 in 2013 were close to those normally found. Recently, the school has focused on improving progress in Year 3.
- The school does not at present teach or promote the use of joined-up writing. As a result, pupils' fluency in writing is constrained and this is a potential disadvantage for pupils entering middle school.
- The school has made a significant impact on improving the progress and attainment of pupils supported by pupil premium funding. The gap between the attainment of all pupils supported by pupil premium funding and their peers has reduced dramatically. In 2013, pupils supported by pupil premium in Year 3 attained as well as the others in English and mathematics. The progress of funded pupils exceeded that of non-funded pupils in reading and writing. A similar, positive picture is evident in all other years.
- Effective teaching of phonics (the linking of sounds and letters) ensures that pupils have a secure knowledge of the sounds which letters represent. A broadly average proportion of Year 1 pupils reached the expected standard in the phonics screening check in 2013. Younger pupils receive a systematic grounding in these skills. Pupils make good progress in reading across the school.
- The progress of both lower-attaining and older, more-able pupils was good in 2013. The school is actively promoting the progress of more-able pupils through special enrichment groups in writing and mathematics. Intensive group teaching is in place to support those pupils supported through pupil premium funding.
- Entry levels to Reception are generally below average, with a few who are closer to the level expected. Good provision ensures that children make good progress and achieve standards generally in line with the national average on entry to Year 1.
- Provision for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is good. Tracking systems provide a good overview of progress. Closely monitored support programmes help pupils make increasingly rapid progress. The school successfully supports the social needs of disadvantaged pupils through additional provision, such as the informal before-school club.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching and progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage are good. Elsewhere, most teaching is good, with some that is outstanding.
- Teachers' expectations are generally high. Tasks planned mostly provide good challenge for all pupils. Introductions are brisk, leaving time for pupils to work on their own.
- In a few lessons, however, particularly those with a literacy focus, the management of group activities is not effective. As a result, while pupils in the directly taught groups often make good progress, other pupils are not always sufficiently focused on the tasks available. When teachers do not maintain sufficient oversight during relatively long sessions or when activities do not engage pupils' interest, learning slows.
- Recent training has improved staff skills in the teaching of phonics and reading. Pupils now have

good strategies for tackling unfamiliar words. Effective systems ensure that pupils are given books with an appropriate level of challenge.

- Until recently, there were weaknesses in marking, particularly in Year 3. Recently improved practice is ensuring that pupils now receive more guidance on improving their work, although there are still some inconsistencies in the extent and quality of this guidance. However, there are few planned opportunities, even now, for pupils to respond to marking. The school has not established sufficiently high expectations of the presentation of pupils' written work.
- Provision for pupils supported by pupil premium funding has improved. Staff are more aware of their needs and have provided better support for them. As a result, their achievement has improved significantly.
- Reception children benefit from consistently good teaching and, consequently, make good progress. This was evident in a challenging session where children were learning about the benefits of healthy eating. The teacher questioned children closely to extend their understanding. Other staff promoted learning well through effective use of questioning in the attractive outdoor learning area.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' behaviour is good. There are few recorded incidents of poor behaviour and fixed-term exclusions are rare. Where these arise, they are followed up appropriately. Procedures for managing behaviour are effective. Pupils' conduct outside the classroom is generally good.
- Pupils show enthusiasm for learning, particularly where the teaching provides opportunities for them to contribute. In well-managed lessons, behaviour is excellent. However, in some lessons, where independent learning is not effectively structured and the supervision of learning is less thorough, pupils begin to disengage, attitudes deteriorate and achievement suffers.
- Pupils feel safe in school, confident that adults will resolve all difficulties. Parents and carers who offered their views felt that pupils' behaviour is a strength.
- Pupils say that bullying is rare. The school intervenes promptly to resolve potential issues. Pupils recognise that bullying may take different forms. However, they suggest that e-safety is not given a high priority. Racist incidents are rare. Records indicate that all incidents are fully addressed.
- Pupils have a good awareness of day-to-day risks. Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe in their daily lives. Risk assessments are thorough.
- Attendance is above average. Persistent absence is rare. Most pupils come to school on time.

The leadership and management are good

- Current leaders and managers are firmly committed to improvement and have made many recent changes. New tracking and assessment systems have been introduced. Some weaker aspects of teaching and learning have been addressed.
- Leaders have been slower to recognise and respond to issues such as the teaching of handwriting and the presentation of pupils' work. The development of leadership at all levels has enhanced the capacity of leadership to drive further improvements. The school works creatively with its local 'family' of schools.
- Middle managers are well trained and committed and recognise where further improvements are needed. They are beginning to promote further change, but some have not been in post long enough to have made a significant impact.
- Systems for managing and improving teachers' performance are effective and are appropriately linked to teachers' salaries.
- The school's evaluation of its own performance is broadly accurate. However, judgements about the quality of pupils' written work are over-positive.
- Effective leadership of the provision for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs

has a positive impact on pupils' progress.

- The range of subjects taught meets pupils' needs appropriately. Subjects other than literacy and numeracy are largely covered within the programme of themes and topics. Appropriate policies and procedures support the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics. The curriculum is enhanced by visits, events and extra-curricular activities. The school's lively learning environment is reflected well in high-quality displays.
- The highly effective coordinator of physical education has implemented a sustainable plan to improve the quality of sports provision and pupils' health. This identifies many new opportunities for pupils to engage in competitive sport, backed by a comprehensive programme of staff training. This has the potential to enhance the good range of sporting activities, extensive for a first school, which is already provided.
- The school has received 'light-touch' support from the local authority. Other commissioned external support provides regular reviews of performance, although some weaker aspects of current practice have not always been identified or challenged.
- The impact of pupil premium funding is monitored closely, with much-improved gains in learning for eligible pupils.
- Pupils' social and moral development is good, although spiritual development is less well promoted. The new 'house' system promotes cooperation and commitment to the school. There are many opportunities for pupils to work cooperatively. Cultural development is promoted through the celebration of various faiths, and through active links with Uganda and Dubai. The school has established increasingly strong links with parents and carers, including through the new parents' forum.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governors bring a high level of commitment, undertaking extensive training to improve their skills. Governors have good capacity to challenge senior leaders about pupils' achievement. They have a good understanding of data and compare pupils' attainment with national figures. They have undertaken a review of their effectiveness. They ensure equality of opportunity, tackle discrimination and promote good relationships. They are aware of the current quality of teaching and have ensured that past underperformance has been tackled. Governors are updated about performance management and ensure that pay and promotion are securely linked to teachers' effectiveness. Governors evaluate the impact of decisions about the use of pupil premium funding, rightly recognising that the recent impact has been considerable. They ensure, along with senior leaders, that safeguarding arrangements meet national requirements. All statutory duties 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	125861
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	426628

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

Type of school	First
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–8
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	299
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Michael Waring
Headteacher	Katie Davy
Date of previous school inspection	21 October 2008
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