

Peacehaven Heights Primary School

Hodder Avenue, Peacehaven, BN10 7QY

Inspection dates 9–10 January 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	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. It is not good because

- Achievement requires improvement because pupils do not make rapid enough progress or achieve as well as they should.
- Standards at the end of Year 6 are not high enough in English and mathematics. Too few pupils attain the higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Weaknesses in some pupils' handwriting are hampering their ability to complete written tasks.
- Some teachers' expectations of pupils are too low and the work set is not always challenging enough, particularly for more-able pupils.
- Teachers do not always check pupils' understanding and respond quickly enough to help pupils during lessons.
- Recent developments in the role played by subject leaders and governors, including the introduction of systems to track pupils' progress in greater detail, have not been in place long enough to raise pupils' achievement.

The school has the following strengths

- The two acting heads of school and the executive headteacher have successfully established a calm and positive ethos in the school following an unsettled period.
- Staff morale is high. The desire and commitment to improve is shared by all staff.
- Secure systems and procedures have been established to support further school improvement. The school is well placed to move forward.
- Pupils feel safe and behave well.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 25 lessons or part-lessons, including three lesson observations carried out jointly with the acting head of Key Stage 1.
- Discussions were held with the executive headteacher, acting head of Key Stage 1 and Early Years Foundation Stage, acting head of Key Stage 2, members of the governing body, senior leaders, teachers, members of staff, parents and pupils.
- Inspectors took account of the 71 responses to the online Parent View survey and the 39 staff questionnaire responses.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and analysed a range of documents and policies, including the school improvement plan, information about pupils' progress, attendance records and the safeguarding policy and procedures.
- Inspectors looked at a sample of pupils' work and listened to individual pupils reading.

Inspection team

Julie Sackett, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Tom Canning

Additional Inspector

Fiona Robinson

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Peacehaven Heights Primary School is larger than the average primary school.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium in this school is above the national average. (Pupil premium is additional funding provided by the government to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children who are looked after by the local authority and the children of service families).
- The great majority of pupils come from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is in line with the national average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action plus is slightly above average.
- The school has a specialist 'Language Facility' to support pupils with specific speech, language and communication difficulties from local schools in Peacehaven and Newhaven.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.
- The school was established in September 2012 following the amalgamation of Peacehaven Infant School and Hoddern Junior School.
- The school operates on two sites. Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 are based in Roderick Road, while Key Stage 2 is based in Hoddern Avenue.
- There is a breakfast club on the Key Stage 2 site, which is managed by the school and was included in this inspection.
- There are two acting heads of school, one at each site. The executive headteacher has been providing part-time support for the school on a temporary basis since March 2012 and is based at the school two days a week. He is the headteacher of Ocklynge Junior School in Eastbourne.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that teaching is consistently good or better in order to raise achievement by:
 - increasing teachers' expectations of pupils, particularly the more able
 - making sure that the work given to pupils is at the right level of difficulty, including work which is hard enough to stretch the more-able pupils
 - checking that pupils understand what is expected of them
 - providing additional challenge for those pupils who are completing the tasks set with ease and providing further explanation where needed
 - improving pupils' handwriting
 - informing pupils of their successes and how to improve their work further.
- Strengthen the effectiveness of leaders by:
 - building on existing arrangements for subject leaders to work across key stages so that they have a better understanding of how pupils' skills develop
 - ensuring that the recently introduced system for tracking pupils' progress is working well and is being used routinely by all leaders, including the governing body, to check the progress made by different groups of pupils.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' achievement requires improvement because not all pupils make rapid progress and reach high enough standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6. In 2013, pupils' overall attainment was well below the national average.
- Pupils' progress is uneven in reading, writing and mathematics because there are differences in the quality of teaching between subjects, classes and year groups.
- Too few pupils attain the higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics. This is because teachers' expectations are not yet consistently high enough, particularly of more-able pupils. In 2013, the proportions of pupils attaining the higher levels were below average at the end of Year 2 and well below average at the end of Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils' progress has begun to accelerate because teaching is improving. In classes where teaching is consistently good, pupils are making rapid progress and are quickly making up for lost time, particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage, upper Key Stage 2 and within the Language Facility. Data provided by the school show that standards in Year 6 are now rising.
- Children's knowledge and skills when they start in Nursery are below those expected for their age. Effective teaching in Nursery and Reception mean that children make good progress during the Early Years Foundation Stage. As a result, attainment at the end of Reception Year in 2013 was in line with the national average.
- The results of the Year 1 phonics check in 2013 were below average. Training to improve the teaching of phonics (the sound letters make) is increasing teachers' confidence and, while some variations remain, pupils' progress in reading is beginning to accelerate. Attainment in reading in 2013 was average at the end of Year 2 and below average at the end of Year 6.
- The school has rightly identified the need to increase pupils' enjoyment of reading, especially the boys'. The school libraries have been reorganised so they are well resourced and inviting. This, combined with the purchase of new books, is having a positive effect on pupils' attitudes to reading.
- The school's successful focus on the teaching of writing, including regular opportunities for pupils to complete longer pieces of writing, means that pupils are making better progress. As a result, attainment in writing was average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 in 2013. However, the school is aware that more still needs to be done. For example, for some pupils, the completion of written work is hampered by erratic handwriting styles.
- Attainment in mathematics in 2013 was average at the end of Year 2 and below average at the end of Year 6. Developments in the teaching of mathematics, including the appointment of a specialist teacher and the teaching of pupils in ability groups, are beginning to improve pupils' progress.
- Pupils eligible for support by pupil premium funding make similar progress to their classmates. In 2013, the levels reached by this group were in line with their classmates in mathematics and writing and about eight months behind their classmates in reading. Data and pupils' work indicate that their progress is improving.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make similar progress to their peers. Pupils who attend the Language Facility make good progress because specialist knowledge is used well to develop pupils' knowledge and skills.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching requires improvement because there are too many variations in the quality of teaching. As a result, pupils do not make consistently good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The work set for pupils is sometimes too easy or too difficult. Some teachers' expectations of

pupils are not high enough. As a result, the work set does not always sufficiently challenge more-able pupils. Sometimes additional tasks, or more difficult work, are not provided for those pupils who are completing the work set with ease.

- Teachers do not always check pupils' understanding sufficiently during lessons so that they can help them further. In some cases, teachers do not correct pupils' misconceptions promptly enough so that pupils find it difficult to complete tasks successfully and their progress slows.
- The quality of teaching has improved. An increasing proportion of teaching is consistently good. However, there has not yet been enough time for recent improvements in the quality of teaching to raise pupils' overall achievement and variations in the quality of teaching remain.
- Some teachers provide good quality marking and feedback for pupils, including questions and suggestions to help pupils to improve their work and to move their learning forward. In these classes, the pupils are making rapid progress because they know that their teachers will check their work and they are clear about what they need to do next.
- Where teaching is most effective, close teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants means that teaching assistants have a clear understanding of their role and work confidently with pupils. For example, during a Year 1 literacy lesson, a teaching assistant sat and wrote alongside pupils, while talking about how they could make their writing more interesting. As a result, these pupils made rapid progress and there was a real sense of adults and pupils working together.
- Teachers and teaching assistants in the Language Facility use specialist knowledge and experience to good effect so that those pupils who attend make good progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Peacehaven Heights is a friendly, welcoming and inclusive school. Relationships in the school are warm and adults provide positive role models. Pupils are caring and treat each other with respect. They are pleased with their new uniform and look very smart. A successful drive to improve attendance means that attendance levels are close to the national average.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils move around the school sensibly and confidently. They behave and play safely during playtimes.
- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils' behaviour has improved, particularly in Key Stage 2, because adults have increased their expectations of pupils' behaviour, particularly in the playground. Most parents who responded to Parent View consider pupils to be safe and well behaved. The recently appointed parent support worker is increasing links with parents.
- Pupils with specific behavioural difficulties are supported well because teachers and teaching assistants understand their needs and respond consistently and positively.
- Pupils have a good awareness of how harmful bullying can be and of the different forms it can take. They told inspectors that incidents of bullying happen occasionally but adults sort out any concerns successfully. This view is confirmed by the records and logs viewed during the inspection, which show that allegations of bullying are taken very seriously by the school and followed up appropriately.
- The breakfast club provides an enjoyable and positive start to the school day for those pupils who attend.
- Behaviour is not yet outstanding because occasionally a few pupils lose concentration during lessons, particularly where teaching is less effective. For example, their progress slows when they are fidgeting, fiddling or looking around the classroom, although they are rarely disruptive to others.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because recent improvements in aspects of teaching have not had enough time to secure pupils' good achievement.

- The executive headteacher, acting heads and governors have effectively steered the school through an unsettled period. There is a positive ethos in the school and a shared sense of confidence about the school's future.
- In the past year, leaders have rightly focused on the practicalities of bringing the two predecessor schools together as one primary school. This has included the successful development of whole-school policies and procedures and the effective building of a whole-school team. This provides a firm foundation for further improvements.
- Leaders know what the school does well and what needs to be done to secure further improvements. Plans for future development are focused appropriately on embedding improvements in teaching and raising achievement.
- In the past, inaccuracies in teachers' assessments have meant that teachers and leaders have not been able to check pupils' progress reliably. Training for teachers, including support provided by Ocklynge Junior School, has ensured that teachers' assessments are now accurate.
- The local authority has been instrumental in securing the support of the executive headteacher. This has strengthened the leadership of the school and has enabled teachers to learn from outstanding practice at Ocklynge Junior School.
- Subject leaders are ambitious and have the necessary skills to make an effective contribution to school development. Their roles have developed rapidly and they have regular opportunities to observe the quality of teaching. They are developing a better understanding of how pupils' knowledge and skills build as they move up through the school. However, the school is aware of the need to provide more opportunities for leaders from different key stages to work together.
- The curriculum is interesting and well balanced. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is promoted well so that pupils develop a mature awareness of different beliefs and backgrounds. The school is committed to providing equal opportunities and discrimination is not tolerated.
- The school has very recently received the additional government sports funding. There are appropriate plans for its use and measures are in place to check the extent to which it is increasing pupil involvement.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are well informed about the quality of teaching in the school and know how training is being used to help teachers to develop their practice. They know how performance management is used to reward and support teachers. The Chair of the Governing Body is rightly focused on how well support is enabling pupils to achieve their full potential. However, the very recent introduction of a new system to track pupils' progress means this aspect of the governing body's work is at an early stage. Safeguarding procedures are robust and well maintained.

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	138426
Local authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	430661

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	420
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kathy Gillott
Headteacher	Susie Silvester (acting head of Roderick Avenue site) Jen Harvey (acting head of Hoddern Avenue site)
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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