

# Pashley Down Infant School

Beechy Avenue, Eastbourne, East Sussex, BN20 8NX

**Inspection dates** 30—31 January 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
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.

- Children are prepared well in Reception for later learning. They enjoy the activities planned for them and develop good attitudes to their learning.
- Pupils make good progress through the school, including in reading, writing and mathematics. Their attainment in reading is consistently higher than found nationally.
- Teaching is good. Teachers manage their classes well and plan lessons which make learning interesting and engaging.
- Marking is good and gives pupils clear guidance about how to improve.
- Pupils feel safe in school and behave well. They are polite and calm around the school. They are thoughtful about the impact that their actions have on the feelings of others.
- Support staff make an effective contribution to pupils' experiences. They have been trained to give good support in a number of activities, including supporting pupils who find settling into school and learning more difficult.
- Senior leaders and governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and where improvements can be made. The headteacher and governing body work together in effectively driving further improvement.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- There is not enough outstanding teaching to enable pupils to make faster progress. The most-able pupils are not always challenged enough to reach the highest levels, particularly in writing.
- The outdoor area for the Reception classes is not used well to give children exciting opportunities to extend their learning.
- Leaders have not always set high enough targets for pupils' achievement, particularly in Year 1, and some pupils are capable of making faster progress.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 19 lessons. Two of these were observed jointly with the headteacher. An inspector and the headteacher also carried out a series of shorter visits to lessons. Inspectors also heard pupils read.
- Discussions were held with senior leaders, staff, pupils and four representatives of the governing body. A telephone conversation took place with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of 91 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, along with the outcomes of conversations with parents and carers during the inspection. The responses made in 36 staff questionnaires were analysed and considered.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation including information on the progress of groups of pupils, nationally published assessment data, the school’s self-evaluation, improvement plans, safeguarding information, and records relating to teachers’ performance management.

## Inspection team

Helen Hutchings, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Cliff Mainey

Additional Inspector

Vanessa Tomlinson

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is a larger than average-sized infant school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for support from the pupil premium is below average. This is additional government funding for pupils eligible for free school meals, those looked after by the local authority or those from service families.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is above average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- A few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The school runs before- and after-school clubs.
- At the time of the inspection the headteacher was also undertaking a temporary role as executive headteacher of a local primary school.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching to raise achievement further, particularly in writing, by:
  - placing greater emphasis on the development of pupils' handwriting skills
  - giving pupils more opportunities to use and consolidate their writing skills by writing for a wider range of purposes.
- Improve the impact of leadership and management by:
  - using the new data management system to set more challenging targets for pupils and frequently monitor their progress towards them so that any possible underachievement is picked up as early as possible, especially in Year 1 and for the most-able pupils throughout the school
  - developing the outdoor area for children in the Reception classes so that all children have more exciting and frequent opportunities for learning outside.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils make good progress and achieve well across the school. This is shown in pupils' books and the wide-ranging displays of their work around the school.
- Children join Reception with skills which are generally typical for their age. Staff have strong links with parents and carers and use their knowledge of children's interests well to plan activities which take their learning forward quickly. Consequently, children develop their early literacy, numeracy and personal learning skills well. For example, when extending their understanding of floating and sinking by looking at how many 'people' they put in a foil 'boat' before it sank, children concentrated and worked well together. Adults' frequent conversations with individuals and groups ensure that children develop their vocabulary and speaking skills effectively.
- Pupils build well on their Reception foundation through the school. Their progress accelerates considerably in Year 2, largely because the targets set for their progress are more focused and challenging than in Year 1. This helps teachers to ensure that any gaps in pupils' understanding are closed quickly.
- By the end of Year 2, pupils' attainment is above that found nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. It is higher in reading than in other areas, reflecting the school's emphasis on developing pupils' reading skills as early as possible. Last year, fewer pupils reached the highest levels in writing than nationally. The school's tracking information shows that achievement targets are not always as high as they should be, although more pupils are working towards these higher levels currently.
- Pupils have good phonics (letters and their sounds) knowledge and use this successfully to work out unfamiliar words. Pupils enjoy reading and read frequently, often to someone at home. The consistent use of phonics and individual vocabulary books through the school has a positive impact on pupils' accurate spelling.
- Pupils write with enthusiasm and confidence. However, because they do not have sufficient handwriting practice to develop a fluent approach, pupils' ability to commit their thoughts to paper quickly is limited.
- All groups of pupils make good progress, including those who are disabled or have special educational needs and the small number of pupils who speak English as an additional language. Staff have a good knowledge of their needs and employ a range of approaches carefully tailored to help them to achieve well. The school's tracking information indicates that a more focused approach to identify the gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding and to support pupils who are not reaching the expected levels in small-group activities is proving successful in speeding up their progress. Though good, the achievement of the most-able groups and those in Year 1 is not as consistently high as it could be.
- The school has used the additional funding for those eligible for support through the pupil premium effectively. Small-group activities and one-to-one support are based on an analysis of individual needs and build pupils' confidence. The school ensures that pupils have access to additional enrichment activities, such as swimming and the before- and after-school clubs. As a result, last year the gap between the performance of this group and others in English and mathematics was around four months, which is narrower than the gap found nationally.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Displays show the interesting range of activities teachers plan for learning in lessons and the way in which pupils' achievements are celebrated.
- Pupils respond well to consistently good, lively teaching with a balance of opportunities for pupils to work in groups effectively and by themselves. Occasionally teaching is outstanding.
- Teachers place a strong emphasis on planning activities for pupils to apply their reading and

writing skills when studying other aspects of the curriculum, for example when writing about Samuel Pepys or The Great Fire of London. These activities are often focused closely on imaginative and creative story writing so that pupils have fewer opportunities to develop other forms of writing, including for different purposes such as making notes or writing instructions.

- Practical equipment is used purposefully by pupils to enable them to understand new concepts in mathematics. Pupils working in pairs developed their understanding of weight and mass well when they used scales to compare and record the weights of everyday objects in the classroom.
- Observations and photographs show the variety of activities undertaken regularly in the school's woodland. For example, prior to a classroom writing task, pupils extended their vocabulary well as they gathered sticks and discussed the design of stick houses. Although some improvement has been made to the outdoor area for Reception, this space does not provide enough stimulating activities for children. Its use is not planned carefully enough to ensure that it is used routinely by children in all Reception classes.
- Staff use their interactive whiteboards well to illustrate and inspire learning. Pupils develop their computer skills well by using computers regularly, for example when Year 1 pupils used a program to improve their skill and speed with number bonds to 20.
- Teachers check pupils' understanding regularly in lessons by skilful questioning. They give pupils detailed written feedback about how work can be improved. This is particularly effective in Year 2 where teachers give time for pupils to read and respond to the teacher's 'wish' and to reflect on how they are moving towards their next achievement target.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- Pupils are proud to be in this school, want to attend and talk enthusiastically about what they have learned.
- The school's calm, welcoming atmosphere and bright classrooms have a positive impact on pupils' behaviour. Classroom rules show how pupils think about and influence the school's expectations. Pupils try hard to behave well and know the 'golden rules'. Lessons start promptly and pupils settle quickly when they move from one task to another. However, behaviour is not yet outstanding because some time is wasted in lessons when teachers have to challenge chatter which is not related to pupils' tasks.
- Pupils have a good awareness of how to stay safe. Issues of safety, including e-safety, are integrated well into the curriculum themes. Study of the locality and how the environment could be improved gives immediate relevance to aspects of road safety.
- Staff are consistent in their expectations of pupils' behaviour. Support staff give continuity of care for pupils in the classroom and in the playground, so that pupils trust adults and share their concerns with them. During particularly wet weather during the inspection, the arrangements at lunchtime worked well and pupils maintained their good behaviour because of the interesting activities provided indoors. Pupils socialised and played quiet games together well.
- Pupils are polite and well mannered. They understand about verbal and physical bullying and that kind and cooperative behaviour makes school a happy place. They say that bullying is rare and that, even if friends are unpleasant to one another, they are able to resolve this and play together again later. They know what to do if they feel unhappy and say that adults sort out problems. Consequently, any discrimination is tackled effectively and quickly.
- The school manages those who have behaviour difficulties very carefully. For example, work in the 'cushion club' links approaches at home and in school and develops readiness for classroom learning for those involved.
- Pupils attending the out-of-school clubs enjoy being with their friends and they feel secure with adults. Activities engage children and the resources available give them choice and make a good contribution to their social development. The facility provides a pleasant, calm atmosphere which encourages a good start and end to the day.
- Attendance has improved steadily since the last inspection and is above average. Targeted support, particularly this year, for some families has resulted in a decrease in the number of

pupils who are persistently absent.

- Parents and carers responding to the inspection questionnaire were unanimous that their children are safe and happy in the school. Almost all indicate that they are positive about the school's arrangements for managing pupils' behaviour.

## **The leadership and management** are good

- The headteacher is effectively bringing her experience to creating a collective approach to school improvement and reflection. As a result, last year staff carried out an in-depth analysis of the effectiveness of all aspects of the school's work and new approaches have been introduced which are now having a positive impact on pupils' progress. For example, changed arrangements are in place to accelerate the progress of those making slower progress than their peers by creating an additional teaching group for some English and mathematics lessons.
- A number of middle leaders are new to their posts but are experienced practitioners and are bringing a fresh and effective dimension to leading rigorous implementation of agreed approaches.
- The headteacher is skilled in assessing the quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' learning. Staff performance is managed well, with targets set for improvement and good quality training in place to help teachers to improve their skills.
- A new tracking system has recently been introduced so that pupils' progress can be monitored more efficiently. A more thorough approach is enabling senior leaders to set sharper targets for the most-able pupils. They have identified that the attendance of those pupils who are supported through the pupil premium has not increased at the same rate as others. This is being addressed well by the recently appointed 'pupil premium champion' who also takes responsibility for ensuring that all pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable are given equal opportunities to succeed.
- Funding to support physical education and sport is used carefully. Specialist staff from a local secondary school are providing specialist teaching and coaching. This is improving the quality of lessons for pupils while ensuring longer-term sustainability by upgrading teachers' skills.
- The local authority has provided light touch support for the school because it judges the school to be good. Nevertheless, staff have valued the support they have been given to moderate their assessments of pupils' attainment. The headteacher's qualities are recognised by the local authority in the request to support the leadership of a school in more challenging circumstances.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors have a wide range of expertise which they bring to governance and their support of the school. They evaluate the effectiveness of the school's work through direct observation and through reviewing the school's attainment information, and use this to set priorities for improvement. They are knowledgeable about the quality of teaching and how teachers' performance is reviewed and linked to salary progression. Governors are well trained and ensure that procedures are in place to keep pupils safe and meet statutory requirements. Finances are managed cautiously to ensure ongoing whole-school viability as the school roll is planned to fall gradually. Governors make clear strategic decisions about the use of additional funding, including pupil premium and sports funding.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	114461
<b>Local authority</b>	East Sussex
<b>Inspection number</b>	441009

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

<b>Type of school</b>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4—7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	299
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Colin Sargent
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jennifer Cruse
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	28—29 June 2011
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