

Seal Primary Academy

East Street, Selsey, West Sussex, PO20 0BN

Inspection dates

13–14 February 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Since arriving at the school a year ago, the headteacher has taken rapid action to ensure that teaching improves.
- Pupils' progress is now consistently good across the school, and accelerates as pupils get older. In Years 5 and 6, pupils make rapid progress in their reading, writing and mathematics.
- A consistently effective approach to teaching phonics (linking letters and the sounds they make) means that pupils quickly develop confidence in reading and spelling. The recent investment in reading materials has greatly improved pupils' enjoyment of a wider range of books.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are well supported and make at least good progress.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding; it has improved dramatically over the past year. Pupils have very positive attitudes towards their learning, love challenging tasks, and work hard to achieve their best.
- Pupils feel very safe at school and are well cared for. They like their school and their attendance has improved to above average.
- Governors have been a very active force in bringing about improvements. They have an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and use this to challenge and support senior leaders.
- The headteacher has successfully supported other leaders across the school to develop their skills. The responsibilities of leadership are shared widely and there is a culture of high expectations among staff and pupils. Overall, the leadership of the school is exceptional.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- Not enough teaching is outstanding. Occasionally teachers do not probe how well pupils have understood what they have learnt.
- There are too few opportunities for pupils to use computers in different subjects.
- Improved teaching has not yet fully overcome pupils' previous underachievement in writing; standards in writing are not yet as high as in reading and mathematics.
- Pupils find some writing tasks uninteresting and lack motivation to write as a result.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 25 lessons or parts of lessons taught by 15 teachers. About a third of these observations were undertaken with senior leaders from the school.
- Inspectors considered a wide range of documents provided by the school, including records of teachers' checks on pupils' progress and the data derived from them, senior leaders' monitoring of the quality of teaching, plans to support pupils with additional needs, and minutes of meetings, including those of the governing body. Inspectors also looked at policies and procedures, particularly those focused on keeping pupils safe.
- The inspectors held meetings with senior leaders, with teachers who lead aspects of the school, with pupils and with members of the governing body. They also spoke informally to pupils during lessons and break times, and to parents and carers before and after school.
- The 41 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, were evaluated by the inspectors. The 23 responses to a staff survey were also considered alongside the outcomes of informal discussions. Further correspondence received during the inspection was taken into account.

Inspection team

Andrew Saunders, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Fiona Robinson

Additional Inspector

Ken Bryan

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is larger than the average size primary school.
- Seal Primary Academy converted to become an academy in April 2012 and is part of The Kemnal Academies Trust group. When its predecessor school, Seal Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be satisfactory overall.
- Most pupils are White British. Other pupils come from a wide range of different ethnic backgrounds. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language; very occasionally the school has pupils who are at the early stages of learning English when they join the school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is average. The proportion of those supported at school action is slightly above average; the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for support through the pupil premium is average. This is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children looked after by the local authority, and children of parents or carers serving in the armed services. The school currently has no pupils in the latter category.
- A new headteacher was appointed in January 2013, following a period of turbulence in leadership.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching, and raise standards in writing to match those in reading and mathematics, by:
 - making sure all adults check thoroughly how well pupils understand what they are learning
 - giving pupils more opportunities to use computers creatively and imaginatively to enhance their learning
 - making sure pupils are always given tasks which engage and motivate them, particularly in writing.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- In July 2013, the first year in which data are available for the school, pupils reached standards which were broadly average. Their progress has accelerated rapidly since the new headteacher arrived and evidence gathered by inspectors through looking at pupils' work in their books and observing in lessons shows that good progress is now typical.
- When children join the school in the Reception class, they usually have levels of skills and knowledge which are below those typical for their age, particularly in communication, language and literacy. They make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage because of the good resources available and the well-planned activities that engage them and develop their sense of curiosity as learners.
- Pupils continue to make good progress across Key Stages 1 and 2. However, their progress accelerates markedly as pupils get older, and pupils in Year 6 make rapid progress. For example, in a particularly effective lesson in Year 6, pupils quickly and confidently used their knowledge to solve multiplication problems, many of them wanting to have a go at the hardest questions.
- Pupils progress less quickly in writing than they do in reading and mathematics, and some have still not reached above average standards. Occasionally pupils become demotivated because they do not find the writing tasks they are given interesting or stimulating.
- Any gaps in the knowledge and skills of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are quickly identified and support is provided so that they can catch up with other pupils. As a result, the progress of these pupils is at least good; for some, their progress is exceptional, particularly in reading and mathematics. For example, some pupils have made more than a year's progress in a few months.
- The progress of boys and girls is similar, and pupils from other groups, including those who speak English as an additional language, also make good progress. The most-able pupils get extra input from a secondary-trained teacher, so they are working well beyond the levels expected for their age and make excellent progress.
- Pupils who are eligible for support through the pupil premium make good progress. The gap in the standards they reach compared to other pupils in the school is decreasing and considerably less than the gap seen nationally so that they are now about a term behind other pupils, which is a great improvement.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching is consistently good, and occasionally outstanding, particularly of older pupils. Teachers are well motivated, and teach with confidence and enthusiasm. They know a lot about the subjects they are teaching. Teaching is not yet outstanding because occasionally the tasks that are given to pupils fail to motivate and engage them.
- The tracking of pupils' individual skills is highly effective; teachers know exactly what each pupil can do, and what they need to learn next. This knowledge is shared with pupils so that they understand how well they are learning, which helps them to make good progress, especially in mathematics. During lessons, most teachers check how well pupils have understood what they are learning. This leads to additional input from the teacher for those pupils who need it and further challenges for the most-able pupils. Occasionally, teachers and teaching assistants do not check thoroughly enough how well pupils have grasped new learning.
- Teachers make sure that their marking shows pupils precisely what they need to do to improve. Pupils routinely read and respond to this feedback, which helps to ensure they have fully understood and are ready for the next stage of learning.
- The teaching of reading is highly effective and pupils quickly become confident reading in different subjects. The school has recently invested in improvements to the library and is increasing the range of books available. Pupils appreciate this and enjoy reading, both as part of

lessons and for pleasure. Some pupils read books which are aimed at much older pupils and show a good understanding of some of the complex and sensitive issues covered.

- Teachers generally make good use of the technology available in their classrooms and when they take pupils to the computer suite. However, pupils do not have enough opportunities to apply their technology skills in different subjects.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are supported by specific strategies which have been shown to make a difference. These strategies are regularly reviewed and are not allowed to take time away from the core learning and teaching that pupils need.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils said that many aspects of the school have improved quickly, and that it is 'a fantastic place to learn'. They said that almost all pupils are now very well behaved and that they get along with one another very well. During lessons and around the school pupils are impressively polite and courteous.
- Pupils are eager to learn and are quickly ready for each lesson. They like learning because the topics they study are enjoyable and the work they are given to do is challenging; they are not afraid of hard work.
- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils said that in the past lessons had sometimes been disrupted by the poor behaviour of a few pupils but that this was no longer the case. For the very few pupils with challenging behaviour, the excellent support they receive, the consistency of how behaviour is managed and the opportunities they have to talk to a well-trained adult about any issues have made disruption increasingly rare.
- Pupils from different backgrounds get along very happily; they are very supportive of one another, not least those who are disabled, so that everyone has an equal chance to be involved in all aspects of the school and to succeed. Discrimination is not tolerated.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. The pupils feel very safe at the school, and have a clear grasp of the things they can do to help keep themselves safe, including when they are using the internet or when they are out and about locally. Pupils said that bullying is now rare, and that they know what they need to do if they encounter it.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- Since arriving at the school, the headteacher has made rapid and sustained improvements. He has ensured teachers know exactly what is expected of them, and supported many in developing their leadership skills. He leads by example and makes sure that the values of the school, 'aspire, believe and achieve', are communicated and developed at every possible opportunity.
- This has led to a culture of very high expectations, particularly in teaching and learning. Inadequate teaching has been eliminated, and any remaining weaknesses have been identified and support for improvement provided.
- Teachers know exactly what is expected of them, because the headteacher and other senior leaders regularly visit lessons where they give clear, incisive feedback so that each member of staff knows what he or she needs to do to improve. This feedback is followed up to check that improvements are securely in place.
- Communication between home and school has improved and parents and carers know how well their children are doing. Parents and carers agree that recent improvements have been rapid and impressive.
- Teachers work together to make sure that the curriculum provides themes that are interesting for all pupils. The school makes good use of a wide range of trips, visits and opportunities to give the pupils broad experiences. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well catered for, not least through the emphasis on the school's values and the high quality of assemblies. There are lots of clubs and activities which pupils enjoy, and pupils are beginning to

take on the responsibility for organising some of these themselves. New ideas and creative approaches to the curriculum are being developed so that the school is ready to make the most of future opportunities.

- The school has made excellent use of the additional sports funding to develop the expertise of teachers in teaching physical education. The support of an inspirational coach has helped teachers develop much greater confidence. Pupils participate very actively in a wide range of sports and competitions and have very positive attitudes towards keeping fit and staying healthy.
- When the school first became part of the academy group, a great deal of support was required. As the school has improved so quickly, the nature of the support has now become more advisory. The school still makes the most of the links within the group, benefiting from expertise in subjects and from the opportunities to see the best practice in other academy schools. Meanwhile, the school's systems for tracking and sharing the mathematical skills of pupils and the development of physical education are seen as innovative and highly effective, and they are being shared across the group of academies.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have a very clear picture of the performance of the school and evaluate it against the highest expectations. They have supported the school through a very turbulent time and have worked hard to make sure that there is appropriate leadership in place and that leaders have all the support they need to bring about the necessary changes. The growing success of the school is in no small part due to its strong governing body. Governors make sure they are trained to use the information they have available to identify issues and to keep up to date with statutory requirements. These requirements are checked rigorously so that the school complies fully and governors make sure that all adults who are working with the pupils are safe to do so.
 - Governors keep a very close check on how the finances of the school are spent. They continue to work closely with the headteacher and the academy group to ensure that budgets are well focused on providing the best possible resources and teaching for all pupils. Governors check that the pupil premium is effectively deployed to improve the achievement of eligible pupils. They also check that information about the quality of teaching and the progress of pupils is used to inform any decisions about the level of pay teachers and leaders receive, to encourage and reward the best practice.

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	138071
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	399916

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	384
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tom Bromfield
Headteacher	Matt Batchelor
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01243 602746
Email address	clerical@seal.w-sussex.sch.uk

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