

Harbour Primary and Nursery School

Church Hill, Newhaven, East Sussex, BN9 9LX

Inspection dates

26–27 February 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		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Pupils' progress is not yet rapid enough to compensate for past weaknesses in their learning, particularly for older pupils.
- Pupils' progress and achievement vary across year groups. Pupils' ability to apply their mathematical skills are not developed sufficiently.
- Not enough pupils spell or punctuate their written work confidently, particularly when writing in other subjects and topic work.
- Pupils who are entitled to extra funding, called the pupil premium, lag behind others, particularly in their mathematical understanding and pace of learning.
- Teaching does not consistently draw out the best from pupils, particularly for the most able, to help boost their learning to good or better levels.
- Teaching does not always make use of the pupils' good behaviour and attitudes to learning in planning more innovative or demanding learning in Years R to 6.
- Sometimes the length of time between teachers' marking work and pupils then acting on the advice is too long, so marking does not always result in quicker improvements.
- While pupils are keen to talk to adults or visitors, their responses are quite brief and their answers lack detail.

The school has the following strengths

- Senior leaders, including governors, have successfully tackled the challenges faced in bringing pupils, staff and parents from differing schools together so they all feel part of one school.
- Staff morale is high and initiatives are laying the right foundations for increasing pupils' achievement over time.
- Pupils behave well, say they enjoy activities, particularly art, technology and those promoting their physical well-being.
- Parents indicate that they have a high degree of confidence in the school, its leaders and the way the school keeps their children safe and secure. Not surprisingly, most indicate they would recommend it to others.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed the school’s work, scrutinised information on pupils’ progress and looked at work in pupils’ books. They considered information about safeguarding, monitoring of teaching and behaviour management.
- Most of the inspection was spent observing teaching. Inspectors observed teaching in 21 lessons, including four joint lesson observations with the headteacher and deputy headteachers. Inspectors also observed small groups of pupils working with an adult other than their class teacher.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read in Years 2 and 6 and talked to these children about their learning and others’ behaviour in classes.
- Meetings were held with leaders, members of school staff, members of the governing body and a telephone discussion was held with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors talked to a small group of pupils formally in Years 3 to 6 and another group from Year 2. Inspectors had lots of one-to-one discussions informally in lessons, on the playground and in the dining halls on both sites.
- Inspectors took account of 167 responses to the Ofsted's online questionnaire (Parent View) and the views expressed by a number of parents who spoke informally at the beginning of the school day. The results of 52 questionnaires completed by staff were also taken into account.

Inspection team

Kevin Hodge, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
David Collard	Additional Inspector
Llyn Codling	Additional Inspector
Karen Willis	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much larger than is normally found. It currently occupies two sites, approximately a mile apart. Harbour School was newly formed in January 2013, following the closure of Southdown Junior School and Grays Infant School. This followed a period of formal partnership between the two schools where the headteacher from Grays Infant school led Southdown Junior school jointly in the position of executive headteacher.
- There are significant building works taking place to accommodate all pupils on one site, which is due to be ready for occupation in September. The school also has its own maintained Nursery on site. It moved from a different town centre site just prior to the amalgamation and will move into purpose-built on-site accommodation for all children in the Early Years Foundation Stage when building works are complete.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who need extra help with special educational needs supported through school action, school action plus or with a statement of educational needs is higher than is normally found.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives pupil premium funding (additional government funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, are looked after by the local authority or from other eligible groups) is above average. There is a small number of pupils at the early stages of learning English.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The school runs three breakfast clubs and offers wrap-around care for pupils after school. There is one for Nursery children and older pupils on the main site and another one for pupils who have lessons at the former infant school site.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching in Years R to 6 so that typically it is at least good by:
 - ensuring all teachers have the highest expectations of what all pupils can achieve and the way work is presented in all subjects
 - checking pupils do not have to wait too long before making improvements to their work as a response to teachers' marking
 - ensuring that the tasks teachers set challenge and motivate all pupils, particularly the most able, in order to boost their learning
 - ensuring that pupils have more confidence to apply their number skills in different situations.
- Raise standards and strengthen pupils' achievement, particularly in Years R to 6, so that more learn at a faster rate, ensuring that:
 - pupils' achievement over time is consistently good, leading to higher standards, especially in mathematics
 - pupils develop skills to write more, using accurate spelling and punctuation
 - pupils speak with greater confidence, using a wider vocabulary, about what they are doing
 - pupils develop their writing skills more often in different subjects to increase their confidence to write for different purposes.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' achievement requires improvement. Results were below average in the school's first national tests in Year 6, particularly in mathematics, and also in aspects of their English work, such as punctuation and grammar. Few pupils reached better than expected levels and those capable of harder work, including the most able, are not fully stretched in their learning. Although improving, pupils are not consistently good at applying their mathematical skills.
- Pupils' ability to write using accurate spelling and a wide vocabulary is inconsistent. A concerted whole-school focus on writing is helping boost pupils' willingness to write in English lessons, but not always in other subjects. Pupils respond with enthusiasm to questions from teachers or visitors, but some pupils find it difficult to express themselves clearly and give detailed answers.
- Pupils who need extra help with their learning, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, generally make good progress as there is a good range of adult helpers to support them within class, in small teaching groups or nurture groups which have intense adult support and guidance.
- Those pupils supported through extra pupil premium funding make slower progress in both English and mathematics, up to a year behind others. However, their writing skills are now at similar levels to those of others. In mathematics, gaps between these pupils and others in the school have reduced by about six months as the school has focused more intensely on their needs in this subject.
- Children in the Nursery relate well to each other, making good progress from lower than typically expected starting points. They benefit from a wide range of activities that develop their early social, physical, and creative skills. In Reception classes, children taught in small teacher-focused groups tend to make better progress than those children who work more independently, as activities set for them do not fully stretch children's learning.
- Pupils did not reach national levels in their phonics (the sounds that letters and combinations of letters make) screening check last year, so the school increased help to boost pupils' confidence in reading unfamiliar words which is starting to work. Older and younger pupils alike generally read accurately, if not always confidently.
- Pupils benefit from regular physical education lessons, active playtimes and lessons taken by an external coach. As one pupil said, 'Having a special teacher helps me think more deeply about my dance routine.' Pupils are confident users of technology such as computers, video and tablet computers.
- The very few pupils at the early stages of speaking English are supported appropriately within lessons but, like others, their progress also varies and requires improvement.
- Extra sports, arts and computer-based clubs help pupils gain skills across a broad front.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Not enough teaching is consistently good in Years R to 6 to accelerate pupils' progress, and so requires improvement. This is particularly true for the most-able pupils who are capable of harder work but are not always challenged to do the very best they can, despite being enthusiastic to learn.
- Those pupils eligible for extra funding benefit from more direct teaching and support, following the school's first set of national results but, along with all pupils, they are not always stretched sufficiently in their pace of work, particularly in the way they use their mathematical skills to solve different problems.
- Since becoming one school, the proportion of more effective teaching has increased, but there are still times when not all pupils are encouraged to do more work, spell words accurately or to develop their speaking skills confidently.

- Projects, such as studies on the Victorians or Aztecs, help motivate pupils. Recent initiatives to help boost pupils' writing skills are at an early stage and pupils do not always write at length or neatly within other subjects or topic work.
- The use of modern audio-visual technology aids pupils' learning effectively. For example, pupils in Year 1 gain valuable knowledge and understanding of simple computer programs to help them learn how to devise working 'apps' which can be viewed by friends or parents. Older pupils were observed using video technology very effectively which helped to increase their knowledge and understanding within local history-based topic work.
- Displays around the school exhibit pupils' work well in order to boost their motivation. Within their books, staff take care to mark pupils' work regularly, although sometimes pupils have to wait too long before acting upon the suggestions made, so the motivation to improve it decreases.
- The help given to those pupils who need extra special guidance or support is effective in helping them learn, as there are a number of additional adults who specifically support them, both within lessons, nurture groups and in one-to-one activities.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils say that, since the amalgamation, behaviour has continued to improve. Pupils on both sites play together well and older pupils make the best use of the limited available space during the building works. Pupils like their school values of 'ABC': Always Be Curious, which they say is helping them to improve their learning.
- Pupils say that bullying is rare, although admit occasionally it does occur. They are confident that their teachers listen to them and act upon any dips in behaviour. Parents are largely in agreement that behaviour is typically good and most, but not all, agree that bullying issues are handled effectively. Attendance has improved to average levels since the school opened.
- In lessons and around the school, pupils are enthusiastic to learn, arrive promptly and settle quickly to work. Sometimes teaching does not always capitalise on this enthusiasm to draw out the best from pupils. Pupils like meeting the builders who have told them about the many different skills needed to build their new extension, raising the pupils' awareness of potential jobs in the building trade. An increased range of sports-based clubs means that more pupils are taking part in a wider range of activities to boost their activity levels.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils on both sites insist they are looked after well and visits beyond school, such as to the local woods, are planned well. Site security is high to ensure that pupils are safe. Pupils are clear about how to use technology sensibly, particularly when using internet-based resources.
- Those pupils who find it hard to learn are cared for particularly well through nurture groups, one-to-one support and links with parents, so that they are confident to learn.

The leadership and management are good

- Senior leaders, including governors, have ensured that staff and pupils from both former schools feel equally valued and clear about how the new school should develop. The headteacher sets clear expectations for staff, pupils and parents.
- Senior leaders have acted quickly to boost pupils' achievement, such as providing extra tuition for certain pupils, nurture groups, and workshops for parents to increase their understanding of how they can help their child learn. However, senior leaders recognise that some initiatives are taking time to make a difference and there are still areas, such as mathematics and aspects of English work, where pupils' achievement is not as good as it should be.
- The headteacher, supported by the senior staff, monitors the work of the school, particularly teaching, across both sites effectively. All staff benefit from observations which help spot those areas which need improvement, so that very weak teaching is extremely rare. Middle leaders have a clear and realistic view of what needs to be done to improve the school further. Staff are clear that salary progression is linked closely to improvements in the way that pupils learn.

- Parents' confidence in the school is high, despite recent changes. Clear newsletters, surveys and an informative, user-friendly website help keep them well informed.
- The range of subjects taught helps develop pupils' skills across a broad front, with a particular focus on sports, arts and technology-based subjects. Planning weaves in aspects of pupils' spiritual and cultural development, but is particularly strong in promoting their social and moral understanding. For example, the onsite builders have visited classes to talk about their work, values and responsibilities. There are still some weaknesses in planning, however, for example in the way that some mathematics and topic work helps boost pupils' learning. Senior leaders keep a close eye on the way the new sports funding is helping more pupils take part in sports-based clubs. These are increasing the activity levels of more pupils who see the value of exercise and healthy eating.
- The school is particularly strong in the way it caters for those pupils needing extra specialist help with their learning. Effective partnerships with other local schools aid the drive for improvement, as do national links with organisations who provide specific advice for pupils with special educational needs.
- The local authority provides regular and low key support, recognising that senior leaders have the skills to help raise pupils' achievement further.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have supported the headteacher and staff well through the process of amalgamation. To ensure things run smoothly, they regularly visit the school to gauge how well building works are progressing, and the priorities that the school has set to help raise pupils' achievement. This helps them have a clear understanding of how well teaching is being linked to salary progression and how well pupils' learning and achievement improve. In this respect they are clear about how well the school compares to others and what it must do to improve further. New governors have attended training, while existing governors have regularly attended courses provided by the local authority to raise awareness of current issues and their responsibilities. This includes the way the school uses and monitors additional pupil premium funds for specific groups of pupils or to boost participation in sports-based activities and clubs. Governors also ensure that pupils and staff on both sites are equally catered for in terms of support, and have a zero tolerance of any discrimination. They also ensure safeguarding routines and equal opportunities are high priorities on both sites.

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	114441
Local authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	412614

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	2–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	519
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Teresa Owen
Headteacher	Christine Terrey
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01273 513968
Fax number	01273 611294
Email address	office@harbour.e-sussex.sch.uk

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