

Wrotham Road Primary School

Wrotham Road, Gravesend, Kent, CA11 0QF

Inspection dates 1–2 April 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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.

- Pupils' achievement requires improvement because by the end of Year 6, pupils do not achieve as well as they could. Not enough pupils reach the levels expected of them for their age in writing and mathematics.
- Progress in writing and mathematics across Key Stage 2 is weaker than in reading.
- The most able pupils are not always set hard enough work, particularly in writing.
- The gap in attainment between pupils supported through the extra government funding and their classmates was too wide in 2013 in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teaching requires improvement because teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve, especially in Years 1 to 3, have not been high enough over time.
- Pupils do not always respond well enough to the advice given to them in teachers' marking.
- Since the previous inspection, checks on the quality of teaching have not led to rapid enough improvements in pupils' achievement.
- Senior and middle leaders do not fully ensure that pupils achieve well. The governing body have challenged senior leaders but this was not acted upon and standards have fallen since the last inspection.

The school has the following strengths

- The school is a welcoming community where pupils feel safe and behave well. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school.
- Standards in reading are improving and it is promoted well.
- Pupils enjoy good opportunities to participate in a range of sporting, musical and cultural activities.
- The new headteacher gives clear direction to staff and pupils' achievement is beginning to improve.
- School leaders have introduced robust systems to check pupils' progress. These help teachers identify earlier which pupils are falling behind and to provide extra support to help them catch up.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed teaching and learning in 25 lessons and examined pupils' work in a range of subjects. Seven of the observations were carried out with senior leaders.
- The inspection team talked to pupils about their learning experiences at school and listened to pupils read.
- Meetings were held with key leaders, teachers and three members of the school's governing body. The lead inspector also met with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors observed many aspects of the school's work, including plans for its future development, the school's arrangements for keeping pupils safe, pupils' attendance records, records of the school's own monitoring of teaching and records relating to pupils' progress.
- The inspectors took account of the 37 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), spoke with parents at the beginning of the school day and analysed 37 staff questionnaires.

Inspection team

Gianni Bianchi, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Maureen Coleman	Additional Inspector
Peter Lacey-Hastings	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a larger-than-average primary school.
- There is a nursery and two classes in each of Reception to Year 6.
- The proportion of pupils who come from minority ethnic backgrounds is significantly above that seen nationally as is the proportion who speaks English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action, school action plus or have a statement of special educational needs is in line with that seen nationally.
- The number of pupils eligible for the pupil premium funding is in line with the national average. (The pupil premium provides additional funding for children in the care of the local authority, children of parents serving in the armed forces and pupils eligible for free school meals).
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Since the previous inspection the school has had changes in leadership. Most of these have been very recent, with a new headteacher appointed in October 2013. The two assistant headteachers and the middle leaders are new to their roles.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching to secure the highest levels of achievement for all pupils in writing and mathematics by:
 - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve, especially in Years 1 to 3
 - improving the quality of responses given by pupils when they act upon the advice given by teachers in their marking
 - ensuring all pupils, but especially the most able in writing, are given tasks which build on the skills or ideas they have already learnt or grasped.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - developing the role of senior and middle leaders so that they can monitor and evaluate their areas of responsibility and speed up rates of progress for all pupils
 - ensuring the gaps in attainment in English and mathematics for pupils supported through the pupil premium are rapidly closed.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium 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, including that of pupils eligible for the pupil premium funding, is not good and requires improvement. Year 6 national tests have shown that the levels pupils reach in English, particularly writing, have remained below the national average for the past three years; mathematics has remained broadly average.
- In the past, the progress that pupils make across Key Stage 2 has been below that expected for their age. The 2013 end of Year 6 tests show that the pupils made much slower progress in writing and mathematics than they did in reading.
- Since the previous inspection, the checks that leaders have made on pupils' achievement have not been focused enough to identify where the improvement is needed.
- Year 6 pupils eligible for the additional funding did not attain as well as other pupils in 2013. The gap was too large and results show they were about 20 months behind their classmates in English and mathematics.
- The school uses the additional funding to provide extra support for pupils who need it, for example one-to-one tuition. Together with early identification of needs, current pupils are making faster rates of progress and attaining levels closer to their peers. However, this has not yet had time to show in the end of Year 6 test results.
- In 2013, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level in the Year 1 phonics check was well below the national average. However, due to recent improvements in the teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make), it is better than the previous year.
- The standards that pupils reach in reading are improving. Pupils read widely and often, they clearly enjoy reading and are confident when reading to an audience.
- Children enter the school with skills and knowledge below those typical for their age. Provision in the Reception classes is good and, together with an enriched outside environment, children make good progress in their early reading, writing, and number skills.
- Recent improvements in the quality of teaching and the school's information on achievement show that current pupils are making faster rates of progress than those in the past. Current Year 6 pupils have made good progress from their starting points at the end of Key Stage 1 and are working at levels much closer to those expected nationally in all subjects.
- In Years 1 to 6, the progress of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is now closely monitored and shows that most now make good progress in line with their peers. Teaching assistants provide good support to help them think through their learning and gain in confidence.
- This year, teachers have become more accountable for the progress pupils make. This ensures that everyone has an equal chance of success and is preparing them for secondary education. This includes the high proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and those who speak English as an additional language.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because, over time, not enough of the teaching has been good or better to maintain good achievement for pupils. Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve in writing and mathematics have been too low, especially in Years 1 to 3.
- The new headteacher quickly recognised that the quality of teaching was not at the levels noted at the last inspection and has moved quickly to eliminate very weak teaching. Pupils' workbooks clearly indicate that teaching is beginning to improve over time. For example, teachers' expectations across the school are rising. The effective use of questioning deepens pupils' learning and, as a result, current pupils are making faster rates of progress. However, this has

not yet had time to impact on end of key stage results.

- Senior leaders know that training for teachers has not been sufficiently embedded to help improve the quality of teaching and raise standards. For example, pupils' work is regularly marked and pupils routinely get opportunities to act upon the advice given by their teachers. However, the quality of the pupils' responses is inconsistent and shows that the pupils do not fully understand how to improve their work.
- Too often in writing, the most able pupils are not challenged enough to extend their knowledge and skills. As a result, their progress slows and pupils do not achieve as well as they could.
- There are effective lessons in the school when pupils are challenged and achieve well. For example, in a mathematics lesson, where pupils were learning about fractions, the most able pupils were moved on to a harder task quickly. Both the teacher and teaching assistant skilfully questioned pupils to help them discover equivalent fractions. There was a sense of wonder as these pupils achieved the learning and they made good progress.
- Classrooms are tidy. Displays include helpful advice that pupils make good use of. The quality of artwork on display is particularly impressive.
- All pupils spoken to by the inspectors said they enjoyed their lessons and all parents who offered an opinion considered that their children are taught well.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils have high expectations of their own behaviour and this contributes to the better progress that current pupils are making.
- The school has a warm and welcoming atmosphere. Pupils' behaviour in class and around school is good and the pupils are courteous and considerate to each other.
- Relationships between pupils and adults and amongst pupils themselves are very good. Pupils listen to each other and to staff very well.
- The school operates an effective behaviour management system which pupils and staff are fully aware of. The behaviour of pupils is not outstanding because a few pupils sometimes lose concentration during lessons, particularly when their work is too easy. On these occasions, their attention wanders and their progress slows.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Parents who responded to Parent View consider their children to be safe and well looked after.
- School records and pupils' comments during the inspection show that bullying is uncommon. Pupils know what bullying is and are confident that adults will resolve any concerns quickly and carefully. Discrimination in any form is not tolerated.
- Pupils are kept safe and secure, and they have a sensible view of their own responsibilities in reducing risk. For example, they know what they can do to help stay safe when using the internet.
- The school's focus on improving attendance has been successful and 'family days' at school have helped this process. As a result, attendance levels have steadily improved and are in line with the national average.
- The breakfast club provides pupils with a positive start to the school day and contributes to many aspects of pupils' personal development.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because they have not led to consistently good teaching or achievement over time.
- Since her appointment, the headteacher has successfully motivated staff and given clear direction to the school. Staff are overwhelmingly positive about her leadership of the school. She and other senior leaders have correctly focused on improving the quality of teaching. Recent

improvements in teaching and improvements in attendance indicate that the school has the capacity to improve.

- To become good, the headteacher and governors know that more needs to be done to develop the role of senior and middle leaders so that they help secure the highest levels of achievement for all pupils, especially in mathematics and writing.
- The more recent introduction of rigorous systems for checking pupils' progress means that pupils, including those eligible for the pupil premium, are routinely receiving the specific support they need from teachers and teaching assistants. The quality of teaching in these support groups is starting to make a positive difference.
- Pupils learn a good range of subjects and learning is now exciting and purposeful. The development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding in this diverse learning community is strong. Trips, attendance at local cultural events and after-school activities, such as street dancing, enrich pupils' learning and broaden their experiences. The pupils have opportunities to take on responsibilities and are very proud to be school councillors and eco-warriors.
- The sports funding is used effectively to employ coaches to teach physical education and provide training for staff. Early indications are that pupils' participation in sport is increasing and the self-esteem of pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable is improving.
- In recent years, the local authority has not provided support or challenged this school, despite its rapidly declining national test results. This year, the local authority has provided effective support for the headteacher which has helped improve the quality of teaching.
- The school ensures that all statutory safeguarding requirements are met.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are fully aware that pupils' achievement, including those supported by the additional government funding, requires improvement. Their attendance at staff training days is evidence of their commitment to making Wrotham Road Primary School good again. Since the previous inspection, the governing body has provided effective challenge, but this was not acted upon by the senior leaders. This challenge has remained effective and now governors work more closely with the new headteacher to monitor the quality of teaching. Together, they are determined to raise the achievement of all pupils. They have set very challenging targets for the headteacher which are closely linked to school improvement. They understand procedures for linking pay awards to the quality of teachers' work and have a good understanding of the school's finances.

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	118577
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	441042

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	421
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ann Walker
Headteacher	Sarah Green
Date of previous school inspection	14–15 July 2011
Telephone number	01474 534540
Fax number	01474 322413
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