

Delce Infant School

Fleet Road, Rochester, ME1 2QA

Inspection dates 4–5 June 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		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Some groups of pupils, particularly those with disabilities or special educational needs, do not make progress as fast as other pupils in the school.
- In the previous year too few of the most able pupils achieved high results at the end of Key Stage 1, particularly in reading.
- In previous years too few children in the Early Years Foundation Stage were well prepared for learning in Key Stage 1.
- Not all teaching is consistently good. Teachers do not always ensure that pupils respond to the written advice that they are given, with the result that some pupils do not improve their work as swiftly as they could.
- The teaching of reading, although improving, does not always meet the needs of all different groups of pupils.
- The governing body does not yet ensure that its challenges to the school are recorded properly or followed up.

The school has the following strengths

- The recently appointed headteacher, ably supported by the new leadership team, has significantly raised expectations in the school. There have been strong improvements to pupils' progress and the quality of teaching as a result.
- Pupils are keen to learn and proud of their work and achievements. Their positive attitudes to learning have contributed to their improved progress.
- The school manages behaviour and looks after pupils well. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe, and feel safe in the school.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors saw teaching in every class. They observed one assembly, 15 lessons and pupils' behaviour in the playground and at lunchtime. Five lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher, deputy headteacher or Early Years Foundation Stage leader.
- Discussions were held with pupils, four members of the governing body, the headteacher and other members of staff.
- The inspectors observed many aspects of the school's work, including support for pupils who need extra help. They heard pupils read and examined pupils' work in their exercise books and on classroom and corridor wall displays.
- The inspectors looked at a number of documents, including plans for what pupils will learn in each subject, plans for the school's future development, the school's use of sports premium and pupil premium funding. They also examined the school's arrangements for keeping pupils safe, pupils' attendance records, minutes of governing body meetings, records of how pupils' learning is checked and tracked, and records of how the quality of teaching is checked.
- Inspectors took account of the views of parents and carers by considering 27 responses to the online Parent View survey and one letter from a parent, and through discussions with several parents.
- Inspectors took staff views into consideration by looking at questionnaires completed by 24 staff members and through discussions with several members of staff.

Inspection team

Steven Popper, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Jackie Edwards

Additional Inspector

Peter Lacey-Hastings

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is a larger-than-average-sized infant school.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is lower than that found in most schools. This is additional government funding provided to give extra support to those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and to children who are looked after.
- The proportions of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, including pupils supported through school action or school action plus and those with statements of special educational needs, are lower than in most other schools. Some pupils have speech, language and communication needs, whilst others have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties or other needs.
- A large majority of pupils are of White British heritage. Other pupils represent a range of different ethnic backgrounds.
- The school shares its site with a children's centre that was not included in this inspection as it is inspected separately. The headteacher of the school is also the head of the children's centre.
- There has been a large number of changes in staffing and leadership since the school's last inspection. The headteacher took up her post in January 2012. A range of other leaders also took up their posts during the current academic year. Eight new teachers have been appointed since January 2013.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that all teaching is good or better by making certain that all teachers check that pupils respond to the written advice that they receive.
- Narrow the gaps in progress between different groups of pupils by ensuring that the school's teaching of reading always meets their needs.
- Develop the effectiveness of the governing body by ensuring that its challenges to the school are recorded and followed up.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because some groups of pupils, particularly those with disabilities or special educational needs, do not make progress as fast as other pupils in the school.
- In previous years not enough children left the Early Years Foundation Stage well prepared for learning in Key Stage 1. However, recent strong improvements to teaching have resulted in a much higher proportion of children making good progress this year.
- In 2013, too few of the most able pupils achieved high results in all subjects, particularly in reading, at the end of Key Stage 1. A much greater proportion of the most able pupils are now on track to achieve high results in reading, writing and mathematics this year. This is because of the high levels of challenge now offered by teachers.
- The school's results of national screening in phonics (linking letters to the sounds they make) have been much lower than in most other schools in previous years. Improved teaching of phonics, however, means that many more pupils are on track to reach expected standards this year.
- Pupils' results in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1 are higher than in most other schools. Strong improvements to teaching have led to large percentages of pupils from all ethnic backgrounds making better progress from their starting points this year.
- The progress of pupils eligible for additional funding has improved. High percentages of these pupils are making good progress this year. However, eligible pupils often make slower progress than other pupils, and in some cases the gap in progress is widening.
- The progress of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is slower, and sometimes much slower, than that of other pupils across the school. This is because the teaching of reading, whilst improving, does not always meet their specific needs.
- An overwhelming majority of parents who offered an opinion thought that their children made good progress.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching requires improvement as it does not ensure that all groups of pupils make fast enough progress.
- Teaching is not yet consistently good. While teachers' marking gives pupils useful advice about how to improve their work, teachers do not always check that pupils respond to this advice. As a result, some pupils do not improve their work as swiftly as they could.
- In previous years, teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage did not ensure that enough children were well prepared for learning in Key Stage 1. In addition, the most able pupils did not achieve high enough results at the end of Key Stage 1. However, the school's teaching of these groups has now become much more effective.
- Teaching is improving strongly, and there is much more good teaching in the school than in previous years. This is because of the headteacher's robust management of staff's performance and her high expectations of them. Teachers now have high aspirations for pupils' learning and progress.
- Teachers ensure that children in Reception focus on key skills well. In Key Stage 1, teachers are giving pupils more demanding work than in previous years. As a consequence, achievement is improving throughout the school.
- Subject leaders have introduced improvements to the teaching of phonics, reading, writing and mathematics. These improvements have contributed to the better progress made by most pupils this year. However, more needs to be done to ensure that the teaching of reading enables all

different groups of pupils to make good progress.

- The headteacher and other leaders have enabled teachers to make better use of data about pupils' progress and results. As a result, teachers are becoming more effective at planning and teaching lessons that ensure good learning by pupils of different abilities. Teaching assistants are used effectively to support pupils with different needs. However, these improvements are not yet strong enough to ensure that pupils from all different groups make fast enough progress.
- Teachers, teaching assistants and pupils have good working relationships with each other. There is an atmosphere of mutual respect in the school.
- Most parents agree that their children are taught well.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are keen to learn and proud of their work and achievements. Their positive attitudes to learning have contributed to their improved progress. However, this has not yet enabled all groups of pupils to make fast enough progress. When teaching is weaker, pupils do not always use their time as productively as they could. This is why behaviour is not outstanding.
- Pupils usually focus well on their learning and work happily and cooperatively with each other. They are friendly towards one another in the playground and share equipment well. Pupils behave well during lunchtime and travel around the school carefully and considerately. They are courteous and respectful to adults and each other. Staff treat pupils with respect and show that they value them.
- The school manages pupils' behaviour well. Staff are consistent about the standard of behaviour that they expect. School records show few incidents of bullying or other poor behaviour over time. Any incidents that have occurred have been responded to well by the school.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils are taught how to keep safe in different situations. For example, they use scissors and other equipment safely. The school gives pupils clear messages about e-safety, including about the importance of keeping passwords and personal information to themselves.
- Staff teach pupils how to guard against the risk of bullying and other forms of poor behaviour. Pupils who talked to the inspectors said they felt safe in the school and that staff are quick to sort out any problems that occur.
- Attendance has improved consistently over a number of years, and is now in line with national figures. This is because of the school's robust attendance policy and effective work with parents and families.
- A very large majority of parents believe that the school manages pupils' behaviour well, and an overwhelming majority of parents consider that their children are happy, safe and well looked after in the school.

The leadership and management are good

- The recently appointed headteacher, ably supported by the new leadership team, has significantly raised expectations in the school. There have been strong improvements to pupils' progress and teaching as a result. This is the key reason why leadership and management are good.
- The headteacher has supported teachers and leaders who are new to the school, with the result that they have quickly become a cohesive and collaborative team. Staff across the school share the headteacher's high ambitions and work effectively together to improve the school.
- The headteacher has introduced robust monitoring of the quality of teaching and the management of teachers' work. Teachers and leaders are firmly expected to ensure that pupils make good progress and that teaching is of a high standard. Senior leaders and governors make

certain that staff receive the training that they need to improve their practice and expertise. There have been strong improvements to teaching and to pupils' progress as a result of these measures.

- The school's evaluation of its strengths and areas for development is thorough and analytical. Leaders have accurately identified the school's increasing strengths and where the school needs to improve further. The school development plan includes clear actions designed to bring about such improvements.
- Middle and subject leaders, although mainly new in post, are effective. They have helped the headteacher to ensure that teachers make better use of data about pupils' progress and achievement when planning lessons. Subject leaders have introduced more effective approaches to teaching and led training for other staff. They are actively involved in preparing the school for the new National Curriculum.
- Pupils learn a good range of subjects and are engaged by them. Lessons are supplemented by extra activities, such as trips to stimulating locations and after-school clubs. The school also runs themed events, such as a mathematics day which featured a high level of parental involvement. The school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Staff clearly value all pupils.
- The school promotes equal opportunities effectively and works against discrimination through assemblies and topics such as the exploration of different religions.
- The school's work with parents and families is good, and has improved. The school and the adjacent children's centre coordinate their work so that parents, families and children are supported in a consistent and effective fashion. Positive results of this work include consistently improving attendance and high parental involvement in school activities such as assemblies.
- Additional funding is spent effectively. Some funding is spent on extra support for pupils in English and mathematics, with the result that pupils' progress has improved. Other funding is spent on developing teachers' skills in physical education and sports. For example, teachers' assessment of pupils' achievement in dance has improved. The provision of lunchtime sports activities has increased pupils' engagement in sports and led to even better behaviour at lunchtime.
- The local authority has given much helpful support to the school in several ways. It has given training to governors and staff, challenged and advised the new leadership team well, and helped check the accuracy of the school's assessment of pupils and of the quality of teaching.
- A very large majority of parents who offered an opinion believe that the school is well led.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has recently carried out a review of its performance and restructured itself to become more effective. Governors have improved their understanding of pupil performance data, as well as of safeguarding. They monitor the school's finances carefully and ensure that money is spent effectively. Governors support the headteacher's high expectations and check that enough is done to improve the quality of teaching. They also make sure that teachers who perform well are properly rewarded. However, the governing body does not yet ensure that its challenges to the school are recorded properly or followed up. This limits its effectiveness.

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	118330
Local authority	Medway
Inspection number	443767

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	322
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Nicola Archenoul
Headteacher	Donna Atkinson
Date of previous school inspection	8–9 December 2010
Telephone number	01634 844127
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