

# Village Infants' School

Ford Road, Dagenham RM10 9JS

**Inspection dates** 12–13 June 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
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' achievement is not as good as it was at the time of the previous inspection in either writing or mathematics.
- Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 in mathematics has been declining and is below the standards achieved in reading and writing.
- Pupils' rates of progress are not consistent in all subjects and across Years 1 and 2.
- Teaching is not consistently good in all year groups. Teachers sometimes set work that is too easy for the more able pupils or that does not require pupils to give sufficiently detailed answers.
- Books are regularly marked but pupils are not always given clear guidance about the precise steps they must take to improve their work, particularly in mathematics.
- Teachers do not always use opportunities in different subjects such as science for pupils to develop good writing skills.
- Subject leaders, although fulfilling their roles conscientiously in Years 1 and 2, have not paid enough attention to checking on pupils' progress in the Nursery and Reception classes. As a result, some of the work set in Years 1 and 2 does not build well enough upon pupils' previous achievement.

### The school has the following strengths

- Attainment in reading has been significantly above the national average for several years.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress.
- Leaders and managers have made a strong impact in a short time on improving this area of the school and setting higher expectations of what children can achieve in all classes.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress in reading and writing.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils develop as well-rounded individuals.
- School governors are very active in supporting and checking on improvements to pupils' performance and progress.
- Behaviour is good. Pupils enjoy school and their families are confident that they are looked after well and feel safe.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 15 lessons or parts of lessons taught by 10 teachers. Additional activities included observations of a class assembly and small groups for pupils who need additional support led by teaching assistants. Observations were also held during lunchtimes.
- One lesson was observed jointly with the headteacher. In addition, the headteacher accompanied an inspector on a series of short visits to classes to review pupils' written work. The special educational needs coordinator joined inspectors on a tour of classrooms to collect evidence of the impact of the school's provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, representatives of the governing body, and subject and school leaders. A meeting was also held with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors took account of 19 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) as well as informal discussions with parents and carers. The views of the staff were taken into account through meetings and 42 responses to staff questionnaires.
- The inspectors listened to pupils read and discussed their choice of books. Pupils' workbooks and folders were checked.
- The school's own attainment records for the current as well as previous academic years were scrutinised in addition to published information on pupils' achievement. Planning documents were examined, as well as records relating to pupils' safety and welfare, including the school's single central record of security checks on staff, the behaviour logs and attendance records.

## Inspection team

Patricia MacLachlan, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Peter McCarthy	Additional Inspector
Janet Simms	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Village Infants' School is larger than the average sized infant school. The Early Years Foundation Stage comprises a Nursery and three Reception classes.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for support from the pupil premium (extra money provided by the government for pupils including those known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after) is above the national average.
- The largest group of pupils is of African heritage with White British and Other White as other large groups. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is below the national average. The proportion of pupils supported through a statement of special educational needs or at school action plus is also a little below the national average.
- The school has experienced some changes of senior staff since the previous inspection. The headteacher was appointed in January 2013. There is an acting deputy headteacher. The Early Years Foundation Stage leader left in April this year. The special educational needs coordinator was appointed in September 2013.

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

- Improve teaching so that it is consistently good or better by making sure that:
  - all adults in the classroom pose questions that require pupils to think deeply about their work and answer in more detail
  - marking, particularly in mathematics, consistently shows pupils how to improve their work and checks that they have followed up with corrections
  - planning and marking in subjects other than in English takes account of pupils' literacy targets and that high quality writing is expected in all subjects.
- Improve pupils' achievement by:
  - using assessment information from the end of the Reception Year to ensure that the curriculum in Year 1 builds accurately on what pupils already know and can do
  - ensuring that subject leaders check the progress of pupils across all year groups in the school
  - providing training for all adults to improve pupils' understanding and application of mathematical skills in all year groups.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Pupils' achievement is not good as it was at the time of the previous inspection. Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 have been above the national average in reading and writing but have declined in mathematics for the last three years. This is because targets were not ambitious enough and teachers' assessments, particularly on transition from Reception to Year 1, were not accurate.
- Achievement for current pupils is inconsistent across different subjects and year groups. The downward trend in mathematics is continuing in the current Year 2. Pupils do not make enough progress in Year 1, partly because not enough account is taken of the progress they have made previously. In addition, the school has relied too much on a late surge in the final term of Year 2. Progress is stronger in reading than in mathematics.
- Systems have now been strengthened this year for moderating teachers' assessments. Progress information on all pupils is now checked regularly by class teachers who are held accountable by the headteacher. She makes sure that additional support is given to any pupils who are falling behind. Progress in writing is now stronger in Year 2 than it was last year.
- More-able pupils, in both Key Stage 1 year groups, are making better progress, given their starting points, than their classmates. However, while there has been an effective focus on assisting those with lower attainment levels to catch up, there is less emphasis on giving harder work to the more-able pupils to help them attain the highest possible levels.
- The proportion of pupils who attained the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics check remained constant between 2012 and 2013. However, nationally, the proportion reaching the expected standard improved considerably. The system for teaching phonics has been revised and current assessments show that performance has now improved and pupils read well by the end of Year 2.
- Achievement in the Early Years Foundation Stage is improving. Carefully planned activities ensure that most children leave the Reception classes with levels of development that are in line with the national average. Most children join the school with skill levels that are below those typical for their age, particularly in communication and language, so this represents good progress. The headteacher has acted quickly to achieve this after a decline in performance in 2013. She has successfully improved the quality of planning and assessment.
- The additional government funding is used effectively to pay for small-group activities in reading and basic skills. In 2013, by the end of Year 2, the gap in attainment between eligible pupils and others had narrowed in reading more than in mathematics and writing. As a result of individual support, many of these pupils throughout the school are now catching up well with their classmates and in Year 2 they now perform as well as their peers in writing. The gap for the current Year 2 has also closed so that eligible pupils are now less than two months behind others in reading and mathematics.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make broadly the same progress as their classmates because carefully evaluated individual support is arranged for them.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language and those with minority ethnic heritages make generally good progress and in 2013 pupils with first languages other than English performed better than their peers in reading and writing.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because it has not promoted consistently good progress, especially in mathematics, as a result of a legacy of weaker teaching and assessment practices in this subject in the past.
- The school's own evaluation of the quality of teaching shows that some in the past was not good

enough to support pupils to make enough progress. Teaching has now improved as a result of good leadership and management. This is improving pupils' achievement, but they are not yet making good progress over time in all years and subjects.

- The main reasons for this are that teachers do not always mark pupils' work consistently with precise guidance for how it can be corrected and improved. This slows down progress. In addition, teachers do not always do enough to extend pupils' language and reasoning skills. For example, they do not ask enough questions that require extended and thoughtful answers.
- Marking is frequent and teachers make encouraging comments. However, advice about how to improve work in progress is not consistently good across all year groups. The feedback about pupils' writing in subjects like science and humanities is not always linked to their literacy targets.
- When tasks are carefully planned, pupils are fully engaged and make good progress. For example, in Year 2, pupils were quickly engaged at the start of writing activities by challenges to identify the authors' intentions in riddles and poems. Pupils made good progress in writing because they had opportunities to improve the first drafts of their work by reading and discussing them with adults. This led to pupils either using a wider range of vocabulary or putting in additional details. However, not enough teaching is as effective as this.
- Pupils who find the work difficult have skilful, focused support in class to help them make progress. The pupils who are capable of attaining higher levels are set extra tasks but these are not always demanding enough.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage focuses strongly on communication and literacy to help the children catch up quickly and develop skills that are typical of their age. Additional resources and improved tracking of the children's learning is supporting better progress in reading. As a result of training, adults are using outdoor activities to stimulate language development more frequently but they recognise that more could be done to help the most able children express themselves in greater detail.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Their attitudes to learning are good as a result of the strong relationships established by teachers and other adults in the classroom. Pupils want to live up to their teachers' expectations and learners of all ages work cooperatively with each other.
- Behaviour is good rather than outstanding because pupils' attitudes to learning are not exemplary across all classes. Their attention can wander if the teaching does not engage them sufficiently.
- Pupils behave well outside lessons, interacting constructively with adult helpers in the dining room and playgrounds. The school is effective in promoting positive relationships. Pupils share the attractively landscaped areas sensibly and safely.
- Pupils take great pride in their well-maintained environment and the striking displays of their work. They talk proudly of 'their school' and offer constructive suggestions through their school council to make it better.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe is good. Pupils feel well looked after by the adults around them. They have a good awareness of personal safety including internet safety because it is well covered in lessons and assemblies. They are active in monitoring their own safety and make confident proposals for improving playtime routines.
- Typically, pupils are well mannered. This is because staff all model courteous interactions, be it in class or the playground, and pupils quickly respond to this.
- Pupils understand what bullying means, believe that the number of incidents is low and speak of the ways in which they are quickly helped if there is any unkind behaviour.
- A good range of sports clubs and participation in projects such as tending the class vegetable patches help to promote a healthy lifestyle.
- Attendance has risen since the previous inspection and is now above the national average because of tenacious checking of absentees by the business manager and acting deputy

headteacher. Behaviour management is effective and the number of exclusions is very low.

- A majority of the parents and carers who responded to Parent View and those who spoke to the inspectors believe that the school provides a safe and caring environment. Pupils enjoy coming to school and are very pleased with the clubs, activities and equipment such as adventure trails that have been provided for them.

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

- Leadership and management are good because rapid improvements have been made in the four terms since the headteacher took up her post. She has taken decisive action to secure rapid improvements in the outcomes for the Early Years Foundation Stage and in pupils' attendance. More ambitious targets have been set this year for all pupils, so that the focus is not just on pupils in Year 2.
- The energetic headteacher, supported by a newly galvanised governing body, has begun to raise the standard of teaching. The headteacher leads from the front and models her expectations by teaching alongside the staff. This has had some recent and positive impact on pupils' progress.
- The management of staff performance makes sure that only those teachers who meet required standards move up the salary scale. School leaders have not shied away from difficult conversations about teaching performance if these are necessary and underperformance is now tackled more quickly and effectively than in the past.
- Subject leaders analyse pupils' performance and check their books. They are helping colleagues to increase their expertise at gauging attainment levels. The special educational needs coordinator is also making a strong contribution by developing clear and rigorous systems to evaluate the impact of support programmes. The headteacher recognises the importance of including middle leaders in checking teaching in their respective areas across the full three to seven years age range. This has not been possible this year because of some staffing issues and this has slowed down the drive for improvement.
- The school's self-evaluation shows that leaders have accurately identified the areas requiring development. Staff members are strongly supportive of the drive for improvement. The headteacher 'expects high standards and motivates staff to achieve this' is a typical comment.
- Opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are thoughtfully planned in the curriculum. Pupils have time for reverent reflection in assemblies that embrace the beliefs of pupils' different faith backgrounds. They express moral viewpoints in their discussions and take practical action, for example to reduce waste of fuel in the school. The curriculum widens cultural horizons with attractively compiled 'galleries' of paintings and displays. Participation in dance festivals and borough-wide sports contests build social confidence.
- Management of the Early Years Foundation Stage, despite the current lack of a substantive leader has steered improved provision, particularly in the stimulating outdoor classroom. Children are encouraged to participate in carefully planned activities. Well-established routines promote positive relationships and good behaviour. The local authority has assisted in checking the accuracy of the team's assessments this year.
- Safeguarding systems meet statutory requirements and policies are systematically reviewed. Leaders promote equal opportunities and tackle any discrimination that may arise.
- The additional government sports funding has been used to improve teachers' skills by engaging specialist trainers to help them teach better physical education lessons, including attendance with their pupils at secondary school sports sessions. As a result, attendance at clubs has increased. Pupils have developed the confidence to use newly purchased equipment to run their own relay races at breaktimes.
- The local authority assists the school's drive for improvement by supporting the new headteacher with shared lesson observations and checking assessments in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Effective governor training has been organised. The school also draws on support from a cluster of local schools to check that teachers are assessing pupils' work accurately.

**■ The governance of the school:**

- Members of the governing body know the standards of achievement and teaching in the school. This is because the headteacher's summary reports provide clear information and governors are now asking more challenging questions about pupil outcomes. Governors have developed a good working relationship with the new headteacher where they feel confident that they can both support and challenge her. They make regular visits on 'governors' days' to check that reported improvements are taking place. The governing body has improved its effectiveness by reorganising its committees and undertaking a focused training programme. Governors have an accurate understanding of how pupils are performing because they use the published data to compare pupils' performance with national figures. Governors understand the link between teachers' pay increases and pupils' progress and have revised the pay policy. The governing body receives summaries of teachers' performance from the headteacher and is aware of what support has been provided to improve teaching and if there has been any underperformance. Checks are made that extra government funding is spent on the intended groups and that this is helping to improve their achievement. Safeguarding arrangements meet requirements and the budget is carefully managed to support the school improvement plan.

## 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>	101223
<b>Local authority</b>	Barking and Dagenham
<b>Inspection number</b>	431263

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Infants
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	321
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Jo Archer
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jayne Meech
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	14–15 July 2009
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 82706589
<b>Fax number</b>	020 82706589
<b>Email address</b>	office@village.bardaglea.org.uk

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