

Drapers Mills Primary Academy

St Peter's Footpath, Margate, Kent, CT9 2SP

Inspection dates 11–12 June 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	N/A
	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching		Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Inadequate	4

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires special measures.

- Standards in reading, mathematics and, especially, writing are low by the end of Year 6. Very few pupils reach the higher levels of attainment.
- Too many groups of pupils, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, make inadequate progress.
- The support given to pupils who need extra help with their work is not consistently effective in helping them to overcome their learning difficulties. The gaps between how well some groups of pupils achieve and others are not narrowing quickly enough.
- Teaching over time is inadequate because teachers' expectations of what pupils should achieve are not high enough. They do not check sufficiently well that pupils understand the work they are given.
- The work set in class is often either too difficult or too easy. Too few pupils are given enough challenge in their learning.
- The teaching of phonics (the sounds letters make) is not consistently good enough.
- Marking does not typically show pupils how to improve their work.
- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement because, in some lessons, a minority of pupils lose concentration and become restless when the work is not interesting enough for them.
- Leaders and managers, including those responsible for subjects, have not been able to bring about the necessary improvements to pupils' achievement quickly enough.
- Governors have not held the school to account robustly enough for pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching.
- A small proportion of parents and carers express little confidence in the work of the academy.

The school has the following strengths

- The academy is a caring and friendly place in which pupils feel safe and secure.
- Pupils benefit from a wide range of educational visits and after-school activities.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 21 lessons; four were joint observations with senior leaders.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and observed the teaching of phonics. They also observed the teaching of small groups of pupils who need extra help with their work.
- Meetings were held with senior and middle leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body and with representatives of the Academy Trust. Inspectors had planned meetings with groups of pupils and also spoke informally with many pupils during the inspection.
- Inspectors considered the views expressed by 19 parents and carers on the online questionnaire, Parent View, and spoke with them at the beginning of each day to gather their opinions about the academy. Inspectors also analysed 20 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors scrutinised the work in pupils' books and considered information about their current progress.
- A number of documents were examined, including the academy's own view of its performance, improvement plans and records relating to the monitoring of teaching.

Inspection team

Richard Potts, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Nicholas Rudman	Additional Inspector
Carol Vant	Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

Inspectors strongly recommend that the academy should not seek to appoint newly qualified teachers.

Information about this school

- Drapers Mills Primary Academy was established in November 2012, following the closure of Drapers Mills Primary School. The results Year 6 pupils achieved in 2013 were not attributable directly to the Academy as it came into being partway through the academic year 2012/13.
- It is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils from ethnic minority groups is well above average and rising. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is also well above average.
- A much higher than average proportion of pupils enter and leave the academy during each year.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is well above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is above average. This extra government funding, in this school, is for looked after children and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The governing body operates at a local and regional level. Local governance focuses on oversight of the day-to-day operation of the academy. Regional governance is responsible for the strategic deployment of funding and personnel, and for monitoring the academy's progress towards its improvement targets.
- The governing body is responsible for the on-site nursery. Children are drawn from a wide area of the town and not all of them transfer to Reception classes at the academy.
- There is an acting headteacher at the school. The new permanent headteacher who will be full time in September is currently working alongside the acting headteacher for two days a week.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve significantly the quality of teaching so that it is at least good by:
 - making sure that activities are sufficiently challenging and interesting for pupils of all abilities
 - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils should achieve and the minimum rate at which their learning should proceed
 - ensuring that teachers use information about what pupils already know to set work at the

right level of difficulty for all pupils

- ensuring that pupils are taught phonics more systematically
- improving marking so that teachers’ comments consistently make it clear to pupils how they should improve their work.

■ Rapidly accelerate pupils’ progress in all subjects, but especially in writing, by:

- ensuring that they organise, develop and communicate their ideas by writing at length in a range of subjects
- ensuring that pupils who find reading difficult have frequent opportunities to practise with suitable books
- ensuring that all teachers require pupils to improve the quality and presentation of the work in their books
- closing the gaps for pupils supported through the pupil premium and those who have special educational needs with other pupils in the school
- ensuring that the most-able pupils achieve higher levels of attainment.

■ Increase the impact of leaders on raising standards by:

- ensuring that all teachers identify gaps in pupils’ learning more quickly and plan to address them more effectively
- ensuring checks on pupils’ attainment and progress are accurate, especially in those areas where pupils underperform most significantly
- improving the quality of improvement plans so that indicators of success are more precise and those responsible for implementing actions can be held more effectively to account
- ensuring that subject leaders are held to account more effectively for bringing about improvements in their areas of responsibility.

■ Strengthen the impact of governance by:

- holding senior leaders to account more effectively for progress towards the targets detailed in the school improvement plan
- ensuring that senior leaders develop more effective strategies for engaging with parents and carers, and raising their confidence in the work of the academy.

An external review of governance, including the academy’s use of the pupil premium, should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is inadequate

- Pupils' attainment is not high enough. Standards in reading, mathematics and especially writing are well below average. Very few pupils attained higher levels in any subjects.
- Most pupils have made slow progress from their already low starting points since the academy opened. By the end of Year 6, attainment is too low. Progress is slow because teachers do not set work that takes sufficient account of what pupils already know and are able to do.
- Pupils supported by additional funding attain less well than their classmates in reading and writing, and the gap in rates of progress across the various classes in the school is not closing quickly enough. Not enough is done to make sure that these pupils have the right work and support to enable them to learn more quickly.
- Pupils who are disabled and those with special educational needs also make less progress than their classmates. This is because too many teachers do not give them appropriate work or support to help them succeed.
- In the majority of classes, most-able pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable because the work they are set is not challenging them to think and work hard.
- Pupils who struggle to read make slow progress because they have not got a thorough grasp of phonics. In addition, the books they are given to read are often too difficult or too easy for them and they are not heard to read often enough.
- Many pupils who speak English as an additional language join the academy at other than the usual times. They benefit from intensive language work led by skilled, specialist staff. This is helping them to settle quickly and to begin to make sound progress from their starting points.
- Recent changes to the way that early reading and writing skills are being taught are beginning to improve pupils' rates of progress and confidence. However, this is not yet consistent throughout the academy.

The quality of teaching

is inadequate

- Teaching is inadequate over time because too many pupils do not make the progress they should. Moreover, they fail to gain the necessary skills, knowledge and understanding they need to move forward with their learning rapidly. Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve and the minimum rate at which learning should take place are too low.
- Teachers do not routinely use information about pupils' previous learning well enough to plan work that matches their abilities. Some teachers' assessments of pupils' attainment are inaccurate and fail to identify gaps in their learning precisely enough. As a result, work is too easy for some and too difficult for others, even where pupils are placed into groups of similar ability. These weaknesses in teaching underlie the inadequate progress made by both the most-able pupils and the lower attainers.
- Across the school, the presentation of work in books is too often careless and untidy. Pupils are not required to write at length often enough, so have not developed the ability to write extended stories and accounts. Weaknesses in the teaching of phonics also significantly impair the development of pupils' literacy skills.
- In mathematics, teachers do not routinely check that pupils have a secure understanding of concepts like addition and subtraction before moving them on to different work. As a result, pupils find it difficult to apply their knowledge to solving mathematical problems.
- Teaching for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is inadequate. The special educational needs coordinator works with class teachers to draw up individual work plans for pupils, designed to build up their skills through daily practice. These plans, however, are not adhered to in all classes, which reduces their impact on pupils' progress.

- Much work in pupils' books is unmarked and mistakes are not routinely corrected. Where there are comments, pupils are rarely given guidance on how to make their work better, and there is little evidence to suggest that pupils are given the time and opportunity to act upon these comments to improve their work. As a result, similar mistakes and misunderstandings are sometimes repeated in subsequent work.
- Pupils benefit from a range of extra activities both within and outside normal lessons. The school is a friendly and welcoming place where pupils are taught to be tolerant and kind.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

require improvement

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. This is because some pupils in class become distracted and lose concentration; learning is then impeded by low-level disruption. Occasionally, pupils are slow to start their tasks and remain passive until an adult intervenes.
- In general, pupils conduct themselves well in the playground and around the building, although a few pupils do not respond to supervisors' instructions quickly enough when assembling at the end of break and lunchtimes.
- Attendance is low in comparison to national averages. This is largely due to the high proportion of pupils who take time out to visit their country of origin. The academy has improved its administrative procedures in following up absence and has applied a range of incentives to reward regular attendance. Effective cooperation with external agencies has seen an improvement in attendance, although the approach has yet to have an impact on all parents and carers.
- The academy's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Governors make sure that the arrangements for safeguarding meet current national requirements and underpin the academy's caring approach.
- Pupils have a well-developed awareness of the different forms of bullying. They believe that there are few instances of bullying and that adults will act decisively if it occurs. Scrutiny of records shows a drop in the incidence of poor behaviour, although the rate of temporary exclusion is above that typically found elsewhere.
- Some parents and carers do not think the academy responds effectively to allegations of bullying. Inspectors did not find any evidence to support that view.

The leadership and management

are inadequate

- Since the opening of the academy, leaders and managers have been too slow to address a number of serious shortcomings. Achievement and standards are too low because teachers do not identify and address gaps in pupils' learning quickly enough.
- Poor levels of literacy are not being tackled with sufficient urgency and this is impeding pupils' progress. Weaknesses in the quality of teaching have yet to be eradicated and, consequently, the academy is failing to give pupils an acceptable standard of education.
- Action to strengthen the leadership team has only recently been implemented. While the acting headteacher is now well supported by her successor, who takes up position officially in September 2014, the roles of the assistant headteachers and subject leaders are not developed. Consequently, these leaders are not yet held to account effectively for bringing about improvements in their areas of responsibility. Pupils' progress is not routinely monitored well, including for those who most seriously underperform.
- Until the appointment of the acting headteacher, the academy's evaluation of its own performance was inaccurate and overgenerous. This has proved a barrier to change and contributed to the slow rate of improvement.
- The academy's improvement plan lists an extensive range of initiatives designed to address weaknesses in pupils' achievement and in the quality of teaching. Its usefulness as a working

document is undermined by a lack of clarity in identifying who is responsible for overseeing the effective implementation of actions. Furthermore, there is a lack of definition about the indicators of success and limited detail about how the work is to be funded.

- The academy has adopted a series of targets intended to drive up achievement, the quality of teaching and rates of attendance. Some targets are, however, not closely referenced to current performance so that they are unrealistic and some deadlines have already been missed.
- The management of teachers' performance has not exerted sufficient influence over how well teachers work in practice, so that too many weaknesses persist.
- The academy does not ensure equality of opportunity because there is too much variation in the performance of different groups; for example, between disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, and their peers.
- While the academy provides an interesting range of subjects that cover the required areas, teachers do not plan specific opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in reading and writing while working in other subjects. For this reason, the curriculum is not fit for purpose. An exception to this is the Nursery, where there is a good balance of adult-led activity with plentiful opportunities for children to develop their own interests.
- The academy has not yet developed a procedure for evaluating the impact of primary school sports funding on the health and well-being of the pupils.
- The academy has formed positive relationships with the majority of parents and carers, who value what it does for their children. There remains a significant minority who express a lack of confidence in aspects of its work.
- The Academy Trust acknowledges that it was slow to appreciate the full extent of the challenges and issues affecting Drapers Mills Primary in 2012. Action to address these shortcomings was, therefore, delayed, and only recently have more rigorous systems and procedures designed to eradicate underperformance been established.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance at local board level has been weak. Governors had been aware of shortcomings in performance, but had not successfully challenged leaders to raise achievement. They did not know enough about the quality of teaching to make confident decisions about pay rises and promotions. As a result, there is not a clear alignment between how well teachers are paid and how well pupils achieve. Similarly, the governing body has not overseen the effective use of the pupil premium funding or the additional primary school sports funding. The Chair of the Governing Body acknowledges that governors had not always challenged the information brought to them and could have been more active in evaluating the success of key decisions and actions in the academy. The Academy Trust has recently clarified roles for the different layers of governance and, as a result, the regional level of governance is in a better position to hold the academy to account.

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	139021
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	440041
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	510
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ian White
Headteacher	Su Phelps (Acting)
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01843 223989
Fax number	01843 230679
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