

Copthorne Church of England Junior School

Church Road, Copthorne, West Sussex, RH10 3RD

Inspection dates 6–7 November 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Although more pupils are now working at higher levels, the overall improvement in standards has been relatively slow. Standards in writing have, until this year, been relatively weak.
- The rate of pupils' progress, particularly in Years 3 and 4, has not been rapid enough to ensure that progress by the end of Year 6 is consistently good.
- Teaching in Years 3 and 4 has, in previous years, had insufficient impact on raising pupils' achievement.
- There is insufficient priority given to supporting the learning and progress of Gypsy/Roma pupils.
- Provision for some pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs has not been consistently effective, leading to variations in progress across the school.

The school has the following strengths:

- Although it remains too soon to see the full impact, senior leaders have acted decisively to tackle past weaknesses, particularly in teaching. There is a strong drive for improvement.
- Governance has improved significantly. Governors are well informed about pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching and are helping to drive improvement.
- Systems to manage teachers' performance are now rigorous.
- Progress in reading is good across the school.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning, feel very safe and behave well.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 12 lessons, 11 of which were seen jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors looked closely at pupils' written work for both the current and the last school year, both in books and on display around the building. They listened to pupils reading.
- Meetings were held with a group of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and three other governors, with the school's senior and subject leaders and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 19 responses to the staff questionnaire and the 29 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. They also considered the school's own survey of parents' and carers' views, conducted in July 2014, and the minutes of a meeting with parents and carers in September 2014.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of school documents, including plans for improvement and records of the school's checks on the quality of teaching. They also considered minutes of governing body meetings and records relating to behaviour, attendance, safeguarding and the tracking of pupils' progress.

Inspection team

George Logan, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Helen Hutchings

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Copthorne Junior School is an average-sized junior school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage. There is a small group of pupils of Gypsy/Roma heritage. The majority of these are from Showmen's Guild families.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is slightly above the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards. These set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium is about one in every 13 pupils and is well below the national average. This is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible to free school meals and those who are looked after.
- The school offers a daily breakfast club. This was reviewed as part of the current inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Sustain recent improvements to teaching, so ensuring that:
 - pupils, and particularly those in identified groups, make consistently good progress across the school
 - the current focus on developing pupils' skills in writing in all subjects is maintained.
- Build further upon pupils' improving achievement across the school, so that standards are raised, especially in writing, by ensuring that:
 - pupils make more rapid progress, particularly in Years 3 and 4
 - more effective provision is made to support the learning of Gypsy/Roma pupils
 - the progress of pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs is more consistent and rapid across the school.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Senior and subject leaders are highly aspirational for the school and have a clear view of what they need to do to accelerate progress and raise standards further. They have become increasingly effective in driving improvement. However, some key changes, particularly in reshaping the teaching team, have been relatively recent and there has not yet been time for these to impact fully on pupils' achievement. The pace of school improvement has, until recently, been slower than anticipated because of staffing issues.
- The school's work to improve teaching is based on accurate checks and evaluation of its quality. Feedback is detailed and supports improvement increasingly well. Consequently the profile of teaching across the school is improving and this is now driving more rapid achievement.
- Systems to manage teachers' performance are rigorous, consistently applied and are making a strong contribution to school improvement. Staff are clear about the expectations set. Targets are specific and closely linked to what pupils should achieve. Subject leaders are developing their expertise and are supportive of their colleagues' development. There is a strong culture of teamwork.
- The school's self-evaluation is largely accurate. The improvement plan is firmly focused on appropriate priorities. All staff are clear as to their contribution to overall school improvement. Staff have access to extensive information relating to pupils' attainment and progress and increasingly use this to provide challenging work for pupils.
- The deployment of funding to accelerate the progress of disadvantaged pupils has had a positive impact on these pupils' attainment and progress.
- School leaders effectively promote pupils' personal and social development, so that pupils are kept safe and behave well. Safeguarding requirements are met.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils are well prepared for the diversity of life in modern British democratic society.
- Leaders have reviewed the structure and content of the New National Curriculum. The school has clear plans for the introduction of a modified assessment system to replace levels as these are phased out.
- Activities funded through the primary school sports funding have increased pupils' participation in sports clubs and competitions. Additional staff training is ensuring that these initiatives are sustainable. Most clubs and activities, which are largely sporting, involve a termly charge to parents and carers.
- The school rightly considers that it receives good support from the local authority. Good links have been established with parents and carers. Better links with the infant school where most pupils join from have secured much greater accuracy in the evaluation of pupils' skills and attainment on entry to Year 3.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governors have a strong commitment to the school. They visit the school frequently, bringing a range of skills and expertise to their roles. They challenge school leaders from a position of understanding, so contributing directly to improving the school. Governors know how the school's performance compares with that of schools nationally because they understand the data on pupils' attainment and progress. They successfully promote good relationships across the school. They have a good understanding of the profile of teaching and ensure that pay and promotion reflect individual teachers' effectiveness. Governors are fully committed to ensuring equality of opportunity and to tackling discrimination. Their evaluation of the impact of additional funding to close gaps in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and others is thorough. They ensure, along with senior leaders, that statutory duties are met, including those for the safeguarding of pupils.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils show positive attitudes to learning, particularly when the teaching is engaging, and this is reflected in the increasingly careful presentation of their work. They work well in small groups and talk through their ideas with confidence. As yet, however, they are less confident in taking the initiative in extending their own learning. While they respond happily to teachers' questions, they are less likely to ask searching questions themselves or to take their learning in new directions.
- Pupils undertake duties around the school, for example, as play leaders. Consequently they contribute well to the smooth running of the school.

- Inappropriate behaviour, or exclusions, are rare. Behaviour is appropriately managed. Pupils understand the impact their actions may have on others. Relationships are a significant strength.
- Pupils' attendance is in line with the national average. The attendance of Gypsy/Roma pupils varies widely. Pupils understand the importance of frequent attendance.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Leaders ensure that the school is secure and staff are closely checked prior to appointment. Safeguarding arrangements meet national requirements.
- Pupils feel very safe in school. They are confident that adults will manage any difficulties that arise.
- Breakfast club provides well for pupils who arrive in school early.
- Pupils are aware of the risks associated with the internet, including cyber bullying. The school works hard to enable pupils to protect themselves in such circumstances.
- Parents and carers have few concerns about the school's response to bullying. Pupils know that bullying is unacceptable and that it may take different forms. They feel that it is not an issue in the school.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching in reading, mathematics and particularly writing over time has not enabled pupils to make consistently good progress in these subjects. Typically, progress has been relatively slow in Years 3 and 4. Tasks have not always provided sufficient challenge to accelerate the progress of all pupils. However, recent staff changes have secured a much higher proportion of good teaching and this is now having a positive impact on pupils' progress.
- While disadvantaged pupils, with additional support, are now making mostly good progress, as increasingly are the more-able, this is not the case for most Gypsy/Roma pupils. There is insufficient focus in planning or within lessons on the significant needs of these pupils. The impact of support for pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs varies between year groups and pupils' levels of need, despite the mostly effective work of learning support staff.
- Teaching has not focused sufficiently on the development of pupils' writing skills. Although this is improving and opportunities for writing have increased in the current year, there is still a legacy of relatively slow progress.
- Systems for checking and improving pupils' progress are well established. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly. Specific points for improvement are identified and both staff and pupils follow these up. Pupils respond well to teachers' guidance in marked work. Pupils have the confidence to assess their own work accurately.
- Where progress is particularly rapid, for example in Year 5, teaching is providing a high level of challenge. In two English lessons, pupils were preparing diary entries relating to the voyages of Sir Francis Drake. Pupils engaged in practical tasks, such as deck scrubbing, wood polishing and eating salt fish, to stimulate their sensory perceptions. All their senses were effectively engaged in preparation for their writing. Pupils were highly motivated by this approach and their enthusiasm was effectively harnessed.
- The school has a consistent approach to the setting of homework. Tasks are thoroughly completed and marked and contribute well to pupils' learning.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- In 2014, the majority of pupils left Year 6 with attainment broadly in line with the latest national averages in reading and mathematics, but below the national average in writing. Standards overall, although showing marginal improvement annually, have not, however, kept pace with improvements nationally. Standards in mathematics, in particular, have improved since the last inspection, with more pupils attaining at the higher levels.
- The achievement of pupils of Gypsy/Roma heritage varies considerably. Those who attend frequently and have been in the school for a sustained period make reasonable progress. For the majority, poor attendance contributes to very slow progress. The school does not have a dynamic approach to supporting pupils more effectively when there are significant attendance issues.

- The needs of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are accurately identified. They mostly receive appropriate support. In general, they make broadly similar progress to that of other pupils. However, there are significant variations in the progress made by pupils who need extra help. Some underperformed in Years 3 and 4 in 2013/14 relative to the others, but made much more rapid progress in Year 5.
- In 2014, pupils made broadly expected progress in writing and mathematics, but good progress in reading. Progress across the school was broadly in line with what is expected, other than in Year 5 where progress was good. Inaccuracies in historic information about starting points in Year 3, particularly in writing, and identified by the local authority, have made the evaluation of pupils' achievement in Key Stage 2 unreliable in recent years. However, these issues have now worked through, so that measures of achievement on entry for all year groups currently in the school are considered accurate. Pupils now enter Year 3 with lower levels of prior attainment than were said to be the case in the past.
- Typically, pupils have, over time, made greater progress in Years 5 and 6 than in Years 3 and 4, because of weaker teaching in those years. More consistently good teaching since September, and current improvements in the quality of pupils' written work, together indicate that progress is beginning to accelerate.
- Progress in reading across the school is a strength. Pupils' knowledge of phonics (the linking of sounds and letters) is mostly secure. Any discrepancies are addressed in Year 3. While not all yet apply their knowledge accurately, pupils read regularly and are generally competent readers.
- The most-able pupils have increasingly good opportunities to extend their learning. The proportion of older pupils working at the higher levels is increasing. The school is creating more opportunities for all pupils, including the most-able, to make more rapid progress in writing, which was a historic weakness.
- In 2014, the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and others in the school in Year 6 exceeded that of the others. Disadvantaged Year 6 pupils in the school were approximately one and a half terms ahead of the others in English and mathematics and half a term ahead of all pupils nationally. Across the school, these pupils often make good progress because of the well-targeted support they receive.

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	126013
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	449041

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	238
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Anne Knight
Headteacher	Ann MacGregor
Date of previous school inspection	28 November 2012
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