

Downs Way School

Downs Way, Oxted, RH8 0NS

Inspection dates 25–26 November 2014

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The school is good because effective teaching ensures that most pupils currently in the school make good progress in all subjects.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage progress well and are well prepared for Key Stage 1.
- Pupils' results at the end of Key Stage 1 are higher than those found in most other schools.
- The most-able pupils make good progress and attain high results at the end of Key Stage 1.
- Teaching is interesting and enjoyed by pupils. Teachers give pupils clear and helpful advice about how to improve their work.
- Pupils demonstrate positive attitudes towards learning and pride in their work and achievements. They behave well towards one another.
- The school keeps pupils safe and looks after them well. Pupils are taught how to keep safe in different situations, including when using the internet.
- The headteacher, strongly supported by other leaders and governors, has raised the school's expectations of its pupils. Pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching have both improved as a result.
- Effective leadership and governance have ensured that all the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection have been met.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not all teachers consistently check how well pupils are learning and engaging in their activities.
- The school does not promote pupils' understanding and appreciation of the range of different cultures that represent modern Britain strongly enough.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed pupils' learning in every class. He observed one assembly, six lessons and pupils' behaviour in the playground and at lunchtime. All six lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- Discussions were held with pupils, three members of the governing body, the headteacher and other members of staff. A discussion was also held with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector observed many aspects of the school's work, including support for pupils who need extra help. He heard pupils read and examined pupils' work in their exercise books and on classroom and corridor wall displays.
- The inspector 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 sport premium and pupil premium funding. He also scrutinised 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.
- The views of parents were taken into account through taking note of the 64 responses to the Parent View survey and through discussions with several parents.
- Staff views were taken into consideration by looking at questionnaires completed by 15 staff members and through discussions with several members of staff.

Inspection team

Steven Popper, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is a much smaller than an average-sized infant school.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for additional government funding, known as the pupil premium, is much lower than the national average. This extra money is provided for children known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportions of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are lower than in most other schools.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage have two full-time Reception classes provided for them.
- The headteacher joined the school in April 2014. The Chair of the Governing Body took up her responsibilities in July 2013.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that all teachers' monitoring of pupils' learning and engagement is as strong as that typically found across the school.
- Strengthen pupils' understanding and appreciation of the range of different cultures that represent modern Britain.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, ably supported by other leaders and governors, has ensured that all staff have high expectations of pupils' learning and achievement. As a result, teaching staff focus strongly and effectively on ensuring that pupils make enough progress.
- The school's systems for checking the performance of teachers is much more effective than at the time of the previous inspection. The headteacher and other leaders make sure that staff are set targets that are high enough. Leaders check the quality of teachers' performance rigorously and make certain that staff are given the support they need to perform to a good standard. The quality of teaching has improved as a result.
- The school's evaluation of its strengths and areas for development is accurate and thorough. It is based on careful and detailed analysis of information about pupils' achievement.
- The school improvement plan focuses on key priorities well. It identifies the right actions to bring about improvement, and is clear about how the school's progress towards its objectives will be measured. Actions taken have enabled the school to meet all the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection.
- Middle leaders contribute strongly to school improvement. They check provision in their areas of responsibility carefully and develop productive action plans to develop it further. Middle leaders use information about pupils' achievement well to ensure that teaching and support for particular pupils are effective.
- The school teaches a good range of subjects that contributes well to pupils' academic, physical, artistic and musical learning. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is encouraged through the school's strong emphasis on valuing and looking after others. The school has been awarded the Inclusion Quality Mark because of its effective work in promoting equal opportunities and guarding against discrimination.
- The school does much effective work in preparing pupils for life in modern Britain. For example, pupils practise democratic behaviour through their engagement in the school council. However, the school does too little to strengthen pupils' understanding and appreciation of the range of different cultures found in Britain today.
- Sport premium funding is spent effectively, for example on renewing and refreshing sports equipment. Pupils' engagement in physical education and sports has been enhanced as a result. Pupils' good performance in sports is also encouraged by their engagement in competitive sports with other schools.
- Other additional funding to improve the achievement of disadvantaged pupils is spent effectively on supporting eligible pupils' academic performance. As a result, eligible pupils make progress at least in line with, and often faster than, other pupils.
- The school conducts its safeguarding work carefully and well. The school ensures that training is up to date and that staff follow the proper procedures when appropriate. Safeguarding work meets statutory requirements.
- The local authority has supported the school well. It has given staff and governors well-tailored training and advice that have helped the school to improve.
- The school has developed very good relationships with parents and works with them well. As a result, a very large majority of parents who offered an opinion thought that the school was well led and would recommend it to others.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance has improved strongly and become more systematic and challenging since the time of the previous inspection. Governors make good use of well-presented information about pupils' achievement to hold leaders to account well. They understand how well pupils achieve compared with others nationally. Governors check that leaders expect enough of teachers through checks on teachers' performance, and that any pay awards are justified by the strength of performance. They check that teaching is effective in ensuring pupils' good progress, and that staff receive enough support to perform well. Governors keep a careful eye on school finances. They share the same strong expectations as the headteacher and make sure that the school aims highly enough. Their impact on school improvement is good.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils enjoy learning and take pride in their work and achievements. Their positive attitudes to learning have contributed to their good progress.
- Pupils typically concentrate on their learning well, and low-level disruption is uncommon. However, there are a very few times when teachers do not check that pupils are engaged sufficiently. Some pupils can lose focus and go off task during these moments.
- Pupils are polite and respectful and demonstrate a strong sense of fairness. They act responsibly towards one another, for example by acting as 'buddies' to other pupils in different classes. Pupils behave well during playtime and lunchtime and when travelling around the school.
- The school manages pupils' behaviour effectively, and the school's behaviour charter is applied consistently across the school, including in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Pupils who talked to the inspector said that there was no poor behaviour in the school.
- The school ensures that pupils have a good understanding about different forms of bullying and poor behaviour, and why these should be avoided.
- School records show very few incidents of bullying or other forms of poor behaviour over time. The school has responded well to any incidents that have occurred, and pupils concerned have been encouraged to take responsibility for their actions.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Staff supervise pupils well, including when using the internet. The school ensures that pupils are kept safe in all areas of the school.
- The school teaches pupils how to keep safe and avoid risk. Pupils who talked to the inspectors explained how they had been taught about fire safety, road safety and keeping safe when online. The school promotes e-safety well, including in the Early Years Foundation Stage, and pupils are clear about how to look after themselves when using the internet.
- An overwhelming majority of parents who offered an opinion thought that their children were safe and happy at school, and that the school managed their behaviour well.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching in the school has improved since the time of the previous inspection. Teaching is now good across the school, with the result that most pupils make good progress in each year group.
- Teachers' expectations of pupils and children in the early years have risen and are now consistently high. Teachers ensure that pupils of all abilities, including the more able, receive a high level of challenge. For example, the teaching of writing encourages the most-able pupils to use a sophisticated vocabulary and construct their writing carefully. Similarly, the teaching of mathematics encourages pupils to think deeply about the mathematical content of their activities.
- The teaching of reading is also effective. Pupils who talked to the inspector said that they enjoyed their reading lessons and the books that they read. Pupils also explained how teaching in phonics (linking letters to the sounds they make) had helped them to read unfamiliar words.
- The school's approach to marking has become consistent and effective. Pupils are given productive and accessible advice about their next steps and how to improve their work.
- Pupils and adults treat each other with respect. Pupils listen carefully to teachers and teaching assistants.
- Teachers assess pupils' learning accurately overall. However, there are a very few times when teachers do not check pupils' learning or engagement rigorously enough during lessons. Some pupils can lose concentration and go off task during such moments.
- Teaching assistants are skilled and effective. They contribute strongly to pupils' learning, including that of pupils eligible for additional funding or with disabilities or special educational needs.
- A very large majority of parents who offered an opinion thought that their children were taught well.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Most pupils in the school make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics in all year groups. This is because of the effective teaching that they receive.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress from their starting points and achieve well.

- The school's results of national screening in phonics (linking letters to the sounds they make) have improved, particularly for boys. The most recent phonics scores are higher than the national average.
- Pupils' attainment in writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1 are above average. Pupils' attainment in reading has been high over time, but dipped slightly last year. Inspection evidence shows that the reading skills of pupils currently in Years 1 and 2 are at the same high levels as in previous years.
- The proportions of most-able pupils attaining results at the higher levels in all subjects at the end of Key Stage 1 strongly improved in 2014. Results at the higher levels in all subjects are above average, with results in reading and mathematics being particularly impressive. The most-able pupils make good progress across the school. This is because of the high levels of challenge that they receive.
- The attainment of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs in reading and writing is lower than that of other pupils, both nationally and in the school. However, their attainment in mathematics is higher than that of other pupils, both in the school and nationally. The attainment of pupils who have special educational needs strongly improved in 2014, and their progress is good across the school. This because the school has a good knowledge of its pupils and caters for their individual needs well.
- The attainment of pupils eligible for additional funding is lower than that of other pupils at the end of Key Stage 1, both in the school and nationally. However, eligible pupils currently in the school make progress at least in line with, and often faster than, other pupils in the school. This means that the school is successfully narrowing the gap between eligible and non-eligible pupils.
- A very large majority of parents who offered an opinion thought that their children made good progress.

The early years provision

is good

- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills slightly below that typical for their age. They progress well and end the year well prepared for Key Stage 1. A high proportion of children finish the Reception year with a good level of development.
- The indoor and outdoor classrooms are well presented and used to promote the development of key skills and knowledge. Teaching is effective, and all activities offered, whether adult led or child led, are purposeful and successful in promoting learning.
- Children enjoy learning and concentrate for long periods of time. This ensures that they get the most out of the activities available to them. Children behave in a friendly and cooperative manner, and their confidence in the early years classrooms demonstrates that they feel safe and at ease.
- Children are supervised well, both indoors and outdoors. Staff make certain that children are completely safe, including when online. E-safety rules are clearly conveyed to children.
- The early years leader, together with the headteacher, has ensured that children are assessed accurately when they enter school. Staff monitor and record children's achievements and learning regularly and clearly throughout their time in the early years.
- Early years staff communicate well with parents, including through home visits and inviting parents in to see their children's learning for themselves.
- The school has not always accurately assessed children's skills when the children have entered the school. However, inspection evidence shows that the assessment of children's skills on entry has become reliable and secure.
- The early years leader evaluates information about children's progress carefully. She uses this information to make sure that early years teaching is consistent in quality across both early years classrooms. Children make good progress as a result.

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	125043
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	449034

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	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	123
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Susan Gibbin
Headteacher	Sarah Lewis
Date of previous school inspection	22–23 November 2012
Telephone number	01883 712518
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