

Coombe Road Primary School

Coombe Road, Brighton, BN2 4ED

Inspection dates 22–23 January 2015

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Achievement requires improvement because standards by the end of Key Stage 2 in 2014 declined and were below average in reading and mathematics.
- The gap between the achievement of disadvantaged and other pupils is too wide.
- Teachers' expectations are not always high enough and so pupils do not make consistently good progress across the school.
- Not all teachers successfully implement the agreed whole-school approaches to teaching. As a result, pupils do not always learn as well as they should.
- Sometimes lessons do not fully engage and motivate pupils and they can get bored and restless. Sometimes behaviour slips as a result.
- Marking and feedback do not always inform pupils about how to improve their work, or challenge them to move to the next steps in learning.
- The early years provision requires improvement as not enough children are making the progress they should.
- Leaders at all levels, including governors, have not been fully effective in securing improvement.
- The governing body has not held the school to account for its performance with enough rigour.
- A small number of pupils do not attend school regularly enough.

The school has the following strengths

- The executive headteacher has injected a renewed determination in the school to provide the best possible learning and experiences for pupils. He provides inspirational and motivating leadership and has rapidly made significant changes to improve the school.
- Writing is taught well and pupils make good progress in this aspect of their work.
- Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 has been rising steadily in English and mathematics.
- The school looks after pupils very well and they feel safe. It is a caring place for pupils to learn.
- The school's values promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 18 lessons, some of which were joint observations with the headteacher. In addition, inspectors talked to pupils about their work, looked at books and listened to some pupils read. They observed pupils at playtimes and lunchtimes.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and staff with key leadership responsibilities. Discussions were held with pupils, governors and representatives from the local authority.
- The inspectors looked at a wide range of documents, including: the school's own check on its performance and the quality of teaching; the school's improvement plan; information on pupils' progress; records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- Inspectors looked at the 24 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and spoke to some parents at the start of the school day. Inspectors also looked at responses to 48 questionnaires returned by staff.

Inspection team

Margaret Coussins, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Nicholas Hague	Additional Inspector
Peter Thrussell	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is an average-sized primary school. The number of pupils on roll has dropped since the previous inspection.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- At just over two fifths of the school population, the proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above average.
- Nearly half of the pupils are eligible for the pupil premium, which is more than average. The pupil premium is additional government funding for those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and for looked after children.
- The school meets the current government floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Provision is made for the early years in a Reception class, which children attend full time.
- The school provides a daily breakfast club.
- Since the beginning of the current term, the school is being led by an executive headteacher who is also the headteacher of Coldean Primary School. He is a Local Leader of Education.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching in order to accelerate progress in every year group by ensuring that:
 - marking and feedback inform pupils about how to improve their work and challenge them for the next steps in learning, and time is given for pupils to respond to teachers' comments
 - all teachers have high expectations for what pupils can achieve
 - teachers plan activities that consistently motivate, excite and engage pupils so they sustain their concentration and involvement in learning, and behaviour does not slip during lessons.
- Strengthen leadership and management, including governance, to make sure that:
 - roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and leaders at all levels, including governors, have a greater sense of accountability for school improvement
 - there is more rigorous and accurate evaluation by leaders at all levels
 - checks are made on the use and the effectiveness of pupil premium funding in order to raise the achievement of disadvantaged pupils
 - all staff follow the school's agreed approaches to teaching so that pupils' achievement, particularly in mathematics and reading, improves and at least matches that in writing.
- Work with parents to improve attendance.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Over time, leaders have not been able to ensure that the quality of teaching has always been good enough to enable pupils to make consistently good progress across the school.
- The headteacher provides inspirational and motivating leadership and has quickly gained the confidence of the staff. Despite the recent changes, morale is high and staff expressed positive attitudes.
- All leaders now share a renewed determination to provide the best experiences and learning for pupils and work well together as a team.
- As a result of rigorous monitoring, the headteacher has quickly identified weaknesses in the school and has taken rapid and effective action to promote improvement. The focus is rightly on improving teaching to accelerate pupils' progress and attainment. Teachers welcome this renewed direction and leadership. One teacher expressed the views of many by commenting that: 'The new headteacher has inspired us. He is a strong leader with a clear vision for our school. He has already had a really positive impact on our teaching and (pupils') learning.'
- The management of teachers' performance is now closely linked to pupils' progress. Good professional development supports whole-school improvement and meets the needs of individual teachers.
- The headteacher is sharing responsibilities with middle leaders including subject leaders who, until very recently, have not been given opportunities to be held to account for standards in their subjects or areas of responsibility.
- Good partnerships with staff of Coldean Primary School have been established to share good and outstanding practice.
- The additional funding the school receives for sport is used effectively, mostly to ensure that pupils and teachers benefit from the skills and expertise of specialist sports coaches. The impact is monitored to ensure benefits to pupils' health and well-being.
- The school fosters good relationships between all its pupils and between pupils and staff, who are good role models. Equality of opportunity is promoted and embedded in school values. However, leaders are aware that currently some pupils are not learning as well as they might. Pupils are adequately prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Learning mentors make a considerable contribution to supporting pupils and their families and helping to remove barriers to learning.
- Subjects and topics covered are broad and balanced. Literacy and numeracy have taken priority. However, leaders have correctly identified that the curriculum needs a review to make sure it meets the requirements of the new National Curriculum as well as the needs and interests of pupils. A range of extra activities, including clubs, adds to the experiences provided. There are trips to local areas as well as further afield. Pupils said, however, that they would like more.
- Additional funding to provide a range of support for disadvantaged pupils is having some impact in narrowing gaps between this group and others but the gaps in achievement remain too wide.
- Parents are positive about most aspects of the school's work. A small minority are not clear about how well the school is led and managed.
- The safeguarding arrangements meet current requirements and are effectively implemented by all staff to keep pupils safe.
- The local authority has provided increasing support for the school since September and continues to support future planning.
- **The governance of the school**
 - In the past, the governing body has not been rigorous enough in questioning the school's performance because governors did not have sufficiently detailed information to effectively challenge leaders and other staff.
 - There is now a balance of experience and expertise among members and challenge has increased. Governors are very supportive of the executive headteacher and the changes he has made and continues to make.
 - The governing body now better understands its role and has begun to challenge more robustly from the information presented to them by the headteacher.
 - Governors are aware of improvements required in teaching and are involved in the management of staff performance and make sure that teachers' pay is linked to pupils' progress.
 - Governors understand how additional funding is spent but have not challenged the school in enough depth about its impact.

- The governing body ensures that statutory duties are met, including those relating to safeguarding.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

require improvement

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Pupils have increasingly positive attitudes to learning and any low-level disruption is rare. They generally behave well in lessons, in the playground and around the school. However, on a few occasions where teaching does not hold their interest, they become distracted, start to chat and fidget and lose their focus on learning.
- The school's systems for recording and monitoring any incidents are not used consistently and it is not always clear how effectively issues are dealt with or followed up.
- The school has identified the need to ensure that the behaviour policy includes promoting positive behaviour and a system of rewards, rather than just using sanctions for any inappropriate behaviour.
- Pupils are friendly and polite and treat each other and adults with respect. Attendance has improved a little but remains below the national average.
- Pupils were keen to talk to inspectors about their school and their work, and reported positively on some of the recent changes. A group said, 'We like not having playtime in the afternoon because it means we can spend more time learning, which is good for us.' Another commented, 'They (teachers) are helping us learn more quickly now, we're doing things that are hard and we didn't think we could do, but we can!'
- Most parents who responded to the questionnaire believe that the school makes sure pupils are well behaved.
- The breakfast club provides a safe and healthy start to the school day and has helped to improve punctuality. Recent changes to reduce the cost of attending have seen the numbers rise from three or four pupils a day to 11 or 12 a day.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say they feel safe. All parents who responded to the questionnaire agree that the school keeps their children safe and most agree that pupils are well looked after.
- Pupils say that any bullying is very rare. They are confident that should any issues arise, they would be listened to and staff would quickly sort it out. They know that bullying can take different forms including physical bullying, name-calling and cyber bullying.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe both in and out of school and in different situations, including when online or using computers or mobile phones.
- The school meets all safeguarding requirements.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because pupils' progress across the school is too variable. Checks on the quality of teaching show that some teaching is good or better but inconsistencies remain across the school. Teachers' expectations are not consistently high enough for what pupils can achieve.
- There are some good examples of marking and feedback that give pupils clear pointers on how to improve their work. However, this is not done consistently well across the school. Sometimes, teachers' comments do not sufficiently challenge pupils to move rapidly to the next steps in their learning. Pupils do not always have time to respond to teachers' comments, which results in mistakes being repeated.
- A review of the use of mathematical resources, and clearer assessment practices, have led to rapid improvements in teachers' planning. This is helping teachers to meet the needs of pupils of all abilities better, especially in number work, and so pupils are starting to make more rapid progress.
- The school's agreed approaches to teaching are not successfully or consistently implemented in all classes. As a result, pupils do not always acquire skills and knowledge as rapidly as they should or make the progress of which they are capable.
- The teaching of phonics (the sounds letters make) and reading both require improvement because pupils

are not currently doing well enough in these areas.

- Writing is a strength in the school. It is taught well and there is a consistent approach to its teaching across the school. As a result, pupils make good progress in this subject.
- Teaching assistants often make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning.
- Relationships are positive between the pupils and adults. The pupils respect adults and listen carefully to instructions from teachers and to each other when sharing ideas and opinions.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because over time pupils have not made enough progress, and overall standards by the end of Year 6 are below average.
- Attainment by the end of Year 2 has continued to improve, and in 2014 it was broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- In the end of Key Stage 2 2014 national tests, attainment in mathematics and reading declined significantly from the previous year. Attainment in writing, which is the strongest subject, dipped but remained just above average.
- Many pupils make good progress in reading and mathematics but too many do not make the progress they should. They make good progress in writing.
- The most able pupils do well in writing by the end of Year 2 and the end of Year 6, with more pupils than found nationally reaching the higher levels in 2014. However, too few pupils reached the higher Level 5 in mathematics and reading by the end of Year 6.
- In 2014, the proportion of pupils reaching the required level in the Year 1 phonics (the sounds that letters make) check was well below the national figure. In the previous year, the proportion had been above the national figure. Extra support is being given to pupils in Year 2 to bring their phonic skills up to speed.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make similar progress to others. Some make good progress, but others do not as the support they receive does not always meet their needs well.
- In the 2014 tests, the attainment of disadvantaged pupils by the end of Year 6 was over 20 months behind other pupils nationally in mathematics and reading and around four months behind in writing. Compared to their classmates, disadvantaged pupils were 20 months behind in mathematics, nearly 16 months behind in reading and over six months behind in writing. The school's most recent assessments show that disadvantaged pupils currently across the school are making more rapid progress and gaps are beginning to narrow, but only slightly.

The early years provision

requires improvement

- The number of children in the Reception class has dropped significantly since the last year when there were two classes. Currently there are 19 boys and nine girls.
- Children start in the early years with skills and knowledge below that which is typical for their age. They make steady, and sometimes good, progress.
- In 2014, the proportion of children who reach a good level of development by the end of the Reception year was below that found nationally.
- Writing is a focus and staff are especially aware of the need to get boys to be more interested. Regular use is made of the outdoor area. The effective early years leader has correctly identified that there is further scope for its development and to enhance the indoor spaces. Currently very little of the children's work is displayed to promote writing around the room and in role-play areas.
- Children make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. They settle well into school routines, enjoy learning and behave well.
- Staff ensure that a close check is kept on how well children are making progress and catching up.
- There are good relationships between school and home. Children are very well cared for and kept safe at all times.

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	114365
Local authority	Brighton and Hove
Inspection number	453750

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	267
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jan Hunter
Headteacher	Stuart McConnachie Executive headteacher
Date of previous school inspection	23–24 January 2013
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