

Maidenbower Junior School

Harvest Road, Crawley, RH10 7RA

Inspection dates 25–26 February 2015

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

- Pupils' progress has not been rapid enough and standards of attainment, particularly in mathematics and writing, have been below average since the last inspection.
- Work is not always demanding enough for pupils, particularly the most able. This is because teachers do not always use information about pupils' learning effectively. Too few most able pupils reach the highest standards by the end of Year 6.
- Recent improvements in teaching have not been in place long enough to ensure all pupils make good progress.
- Teachers are not always aware of when to move pupils on in their learning, or have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve.
- Pupils do not always have enough opportunities to practise and develop their writing skills or write in a wide range of subjects.
- Pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to use their reasoning and calculation skills to solve problems.

The school has the following strengths

- School leaders, managers and governors have taken effective steps to improve teaching rapidly. As a result, current pupils now make better progress and standards in most year groups are rising. An increasing proportion achieve standards closer to those typical for pupils' ages.
- The very determined headteacher and leadership team have set high expectations. Staff are held accountable for pupils' performance. Working in strong partnership with governors and staff, the new headteacher has implemented rigorous and effective plans for improvement.
- Governors know the school and its community well. They play a strong role in improving the school's effectiveness by holding staff to account.
- The school is a happy and pleasant place where pupils enjoy learning. Their behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. Pupils are safe and well cared for.
- The marking of pupils' work and use of individual pupil targets have improved. Clear systems provide helpful feedback about what pupils need to do to further improve their work.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 19 lessons or parts of lessons. Approximately two thirds of these were observed jointly either with the headteacher or deputy headteacher. These observations gave inspectors the opportunity to look carefully at pupils’ work in their books to assess the rates of progress pupils were making in the current year.
- In addition, inspectors made a number of shorter visits to the school’s specially resourced provision, the Special Support Centre, and carried out learning walks to observe pupils who receive a wide range of support.
- Inspectors observed one assembly.
- Meetings were held with three members of the governing body and the headteacher, and with subject and other leaders.
- Inspectors examined records of the local authority’s involvement with the school and met with a local authority representative.
- Inspectors held a meeting with two groups of pupils. They talked informally with pupils at breaks and lunchtimes. Inspectors listened to pupils read.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of documentation, including the school’s own judgments on its strengths and weaknesses, the assessment information it collects on pupils’ progress, plans for improvement and records of pupils’ behaviour and attendance. Documents detailing the school’s arrangements for safeguarding were reviewed and discussed.
- Inspectors considered parents’ views of the school through informal discussions before school. The inspection team also considered the 105 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, the school’s own parents’ survey, two calls to the inspection service provider and one letter received during the inspection. There were 30 staff questionnaires received. The team talked to staff during the inspection.

Inspection team

Wendy Forbes, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Kanawaljit Singh	Additional inspector
David Howley	Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is larger than an average-sized primary school.
- Pupils are taught in five parallel single-age classes in each year group.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is below average. A very small number of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding to support children in local authority care and those known to be eligible for free school meals) is well below the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is just above the national average.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The Special Support Centre managed by the governing body caters for up to eight pupils. The centre provides specialist learning support primarily for the development of pupils' reading, writing and communication needs. Currently six pupils from the main school attend this provision.
- Since the previous inspection there have been several changes in staffing, including the appointment of a new headteacher in September 2013 and deputy headteacher in September 2014.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that a higher proportion of pupils make better-than-expected progress in order to raise standards by ensuring:
 - the quality of teaching is consistently good or better
 - information on pupils' learning is used to plan challenging work for all pupils, especially the most able, so they make rapid progress, particularly in mathematics and writing
 - pupils are moved on to more demanding work as soon as they are ready
 - all teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve
 - pupils have more opportunities to practise and develop their writing skills and competencies in a wider range of subjects
 - pupils improve their mathematical reasoning and calculation skills to solve problems.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Leaders have taken decisive steps to improve teaching and learning and eliminate weak teaching, following a fall in standards since the previous inspection. Regular observations and checks on achievement accurately identify what needs to improve. Effective training coupled with a programme of coaching is having a positive impact, contributing strongly to better pupil progress, particularly in writing and mathematics.
- Effective leadership in the Special Support Centre has ensured pupils with additional needs are starting to make faster progress in their learning.
- The new headteacher is determined the school will be the best it can be. The drive to improve standards is shared by the whole school. It has already ensured that the progress of disadvantaged pupils supported by extra funding is accelerating. Specific programmes of learning targeted at improving pupils' basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics are provided by additional teaching and support staff. This, together with support in lessons, is helping these pupils to improve at a faster rate than previously.
- Leaders have raised teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve. However, recent improvements have not been in place long enough to ensure all pupils make good enough progress.
- Procedures for managing performance are effective. Leaders ensure any pay awards recognise the most effective teaching and pupils' progress. New staff, including teachers who are newly qualified, benefit from good support and training.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. Good relations are encouraged. Pupils behave well and have positive attitudes to learning. They learn about social and democratic processes through curriculum topics. Leaders regularly review the curriculum to make sure it reflects pupils' needs and takes into consideration national requirements. The school provides an interesting range of subjects and enrichment activities. These help them to understand different cultures and ways of life and prepares them well for life in modern Britain.
- Equality of opportunity is promoted at every level of the school. Discrimination is not tolerated. The school ensures additional funding is used effectively to provide support for disadvantaged pupils and those who have a disability or special educational needs.
- The school has made effective arrangements for spending the primary sports funding to improve staff expertise and widen sporting opportunities. Qualified sports coaches work with staff, providing specialist coaching. The increased number of clubs and competitions have improved pupils' opportunities to take part in sport. Approximately one quarter of Year 6 pupils are trained sports leaders.
- Middle leaders provide effective leadership. Literacy and numeracy leaders carefully plan training and support for teachers. Strengths in leaders' own teaching provide strong role models for staff, helping to strengthen teaching and accelerate progress.
- Parents appreciate opportunities provided to be involved in their child's education. However, a small number of parents felt the school did not respond quickly enough to concerns they raised or provided valuable information about their child's progress. Leaders are aware of these concerns and continue to work hard to ensure effective communication and provide helpful progress information.
- All statutory requirements for the safeguarding of pupils are met and the arrangements are effective. Staff are well trained and follow procedures carefully and effectively to ensure pupils' safety.
- Since the previous inspection, the local authority has worked effectively to help leaders eradicate previous weaknesses. The challenge and support provided have ensured school assessment information has been routinely and carefully analysed.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors know the school well and play an effective role. They systematically challenge senior leaders over the school's effectiveness. They are knowledgeable about what needs to improve and the impact of the steps taken to tackle weaknesses following the last inspection. They ask searching questions to hold staff to account. They have good knowledge of teachers' effectiveness through first-hand experiences and discussions with senior staff. Governors have developed their own skills well, through training, in order to support and strengthen leadership. They understand information on learning and are aware of how the achievement of pupils compares with that in other schools. They know that achievement has started to improve. Governors set clear targets in managing the performance of the headteacher and staff, and make sure that teachers' pay increases are closely linked to evidence of their impact and competence. Leaders and governors have a clear understanding of the impact of additional targeted funding, such as the pupil premium and the primary school sports funding.

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

- Behaviour of pupils is consistently good, including in the Special Support Centre. Staff, parents and pupils agree.
- Pupils are very polite and courteous and show good attitudes to learning. Lessons are rarely interrupted by poor behaviour. As one pupil said, 'The school's much better now.' However, a small number confirmed that some work is too easy.
- Pupils are proud of their school, particularly the way the school promotes the rights of individuals. Many were enthusiastic about opportunities to take on additional roles as sports captains, members of the eco and school council or looking after the school's chickens.
- Behaviour is not yet outstanding because in a few lessons where the level of learning does not fully engage them, some pupils lose focus.
- Attendance has improved and is above average because of the effective actions taken by the school.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good throughout the school, including in the school's Special Support Centre.
- Information gathered from the online questionnaire Parent View and through conversations indicates most parents are happy with the care and education provided for their children and feel they are safe at school. Pupils agree and are confident there is always someone they can talk to if worried about anything. Many were particularly enthusiastic about learning to ride bicycles safely. Safeguarding and other policies ensure pupils' safety and well-being.
- Staff are suitably trained in child protection procedures and recognise and act on any signs of abuse or neglect.
- Pupils are aware of the different forms that bullying can take, including cyber-bullying or harsh name-calling, and know what to do if they ever need help. They told inspectors bullying is rare in the school and that any would be dealt with quickly and effectively by staff, as school records show.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because it has not had a good enough effect on pupils' learning. Pupils have not made good progress and attainment has been below average, most significantly in writing and mathematics.
- Where information about how well pupils are progressing is used well, activities are planned effectively to meet most pupils' needs, providing a good level of challenge. However, this information is not always used well enough to plan tasks at the right level for all pupils, particularly the most able.
- Teachers are not always aware of when to move pupils on in their learning. They do not have high enough expectations of what they can achieve. Sometimes pupils are given work that is a repeat of previous tasks and not demanding enough. All this means that the progress of some pupils is slower than it might be.
- The focus on improving pupils' literacy has already brought about some improvements. Where the teaching of writing is effective, teachers set ambitious tasks and check pupils' learning frequently. However, inconsistencies remain. Sometimes work set for pupils does not develop their writing skills well. There are not enough opportunities for pupils to practise their writing skills in a wide range of subjects.
- Pupils make faster progress in reading because of the high-quality support they receive and opportunities to read widely and often.
- In mathematics, the pace of learning is sometimes limited because pupils do not always use their calculation or reasoning skills well enough to solve problems.
- The quality of marking and feedback to pupils about how they are doing has improved. Teachers' comments indicating what pupils have done well or need to improve and time given to reflect on this guidance ensures pupils are clear about their next steps in learning.
- Teaching assistants are effective in supporting disadvantaged pupils and those who have special or additional educational needs through the delivery of effective support programmes, including in the school's Special Support Centre. Training ensures they are competent to support pupils' learning well. This is helping accelerate pupils' progress from a wide range of starting points.

- The few pupils who speak English as an additional language benefit from well-crafted support. Activities are individually planned to help these pupils have equal access to learning. As a result, some make better-than-expected progress in their learning.
- Support by school leaders and checks on the quality of teaching and learning are helping teachers to rapidly improve their performance. This is having a positive impact on pupils' learning and progress.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' achievement requires improvement because it has not been good over a sustained period. Standards at the end of Year 6 have been below average since the previous inspection, most significantly in writing and mathematics.
- The changes the new headteacher has made have quickly begun to increase the amount of progress pupils make. School information and work in books indicate that Year 6 pupils are on track to make better progress this year.
- A relatively small number of pupils qualify for support through the pupil premium. Progress for these pupils has been slower than for other pupils in reading, writing and mathematics. In 2014, eligible pupils were approximately two terms behind other pupils in the school and broadly in line with pupils nationally in reading. In writing, they were about a year behind their classmates as well as other pupils nationally. In mathematics, they were two terms behind other pupils in the school and one term behind other pupils nationally. School information shows the gap between these and other pupils is closing rapidly as the result of the focus on raising attainment and accelerating progress.
- School information shows the very few pupils who speak English as an additional language make better progress than other pupils in all subjects because of the individually crafted support provided.
- The achievement of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is similar to their classmates, sometimes better. Their progress is quickening as a result of teachers' close monitoring of their learning and the well-focused support provided. The school's Special Support Centre ensures the small group of pupils with additional needs benefit well from support in their basic skills. As a result, some of these pupils are starting to make faster progress.
- Too few of the most able pupils regularly achieve the higher Levels 5 and 6 at the end of Year 6. The proportion of pupils doing so in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6 was below the national average last year, significantly so in mathematics and writing. Currently, some of the most able pupils are working at higher standards. However, not all teachers use information about how well these pupils are doing to set work that is always sufficiently demanding.
- The considerable work to improve teaching is now leading to improvements in pupils' achievement. Pupils in most year groups are currently working at standards close to those expected for their age. Attainment is rising and progress accelerating 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	131603
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	453441

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	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	595
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sarah Pratt
Headteacher	Allyson Croucher
Date of previous school inspection	28 February–1 March 2013
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