

Rusper Primary School

Rusper, Horsham, RH12 4PR

Inspection dates 14–15 May 2015

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Since the previous inspection three years ago, teaching across the school has not enabled pupils to make sufficient year-on-year progress in writing and mathematics. As a result, the progress pupils make has not been good enough.
- Higher-than-average staff absence has hampered the determined efforts of the headteacher to raise the quality of teaching over time. Consequently, standards across the school have not improved quickly enough.
- Teachers do not use the information they have on their pupils well enough to plan work that always challenges pupils, particularly the most able.
- The good skills teachers have are not shared sufficiently to improve the quality of teaching across the school.
- Pupils do not always have enough opportunities to practise their writing skills or write at length in a wide range of subjects.
- Pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to use their reasoning and calculation skills to solve problems.
- The relatively new governing body has not had the opportunity to be fully involved in monitoring all aspects of the school's performance, particularly the quality of teaching in order to bring about improvements.
- The skills of middle leaders in monitoring school improvement are not yet fully developed to bring about improvements, particularly in mathematics.

The school has the following strengths

- Teaching is now improving gradually, with activities better targeted to the abilities of pupils; attainment is starting to rise as a result. Staff are more accountable for pupils' performance.
- Children progress well in the Reception class and they are well prepared for their next stage in their learning.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. Pupils behave well in school. They say they feel safe in school and that they are well looked after.
- The social, moral, spiritual and cultural understanding of the pupils is well developed. Intolerance and discrimination are not accepted in the school.

Information about this inspection

- The lead inspector observed pupils' learning in 11 lessons or parts of lessons. Five of these were observed jointly with the headteacher. These observations gave the inspector 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, the inspector carried out a learning walk to observe the teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they make). The inspector observed one lesson provided by external providers from West Sussex Music.
- Meetings were held with three members of the governing body, the headteacher and other leaders.
- The inspector examined records of the local authority's involvement with the school and met with a local authority representative.
- The inspector held a meeting with a group of pupils and talked informally with pupils at breaks and lunchtimes. The inspector also listened to pupils read.
- The inspector looked at a wide range of documentation, including the school's own judgements on its strengths and weaknesses, the data 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.
- The inspector considered parents' views of the school through informal discussions before school and considered the 24 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. There were 16 staff questionnaires received. The inspector talked to staff during the inspection.

Inspection team

Wendy Forbes, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is smaller than an average-sized primary school.
- Pupils are taught in four mixed-age classes including in the full-time Early Years Foundation Stage. This class comprises both Reception age children and Year 1 pupils.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is below average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding to support children who are looked after and those known to be eligible for free school meals) is well below the national average. There were no Year 6 pupils eligible for pupil premium support in 2014 therefore no reading, writing or mathematics attainment is reported in the Achievement section of this report
- 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.
- Since the previous inspection there has been an above average proportion of staff absence and turnover.
- The headteacher is currently seconded to Brighton University's Education Department one day a week for approximately two thirds of the school's academic year.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching in writing and mathematics and accelerate pupils' progress in Key Stages 1 and 2 by ensuring that teachers:
 - provide the most-able pupils with challenging work at all times, to ensure they make the progress they are capable of making
 - improve pupils' progress in mathematics through increased opportunities for pupils to apply their numeracy skills to solving real-life problems
 - improve the teaching of writing, including in grammar, punctuation and spelling, and provide more opportunities for pupils to apply these skills across a wider range of subjects
 - work closely together to share good practice to improve the quality of teaching.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - developing the skills of leaders other than the headteacher so they can check the impact of their actions and thus contribute to improving the quality of teaching and learning and raise achievement
 - ensuring leaders provide governors with regular opportunities to monitor the impact of the school's actions in improving the school's performance.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management **require improvement**

- Since the last inspection three years ago, leaders have not improved the quality of teaching sufficiently to enable all pupils to make good progress. The headteacher has clear aims to strengthen teaching and accelerate progress, but the rate of improvement has been slow. This is in part due to higher-than-average staff absence over time.
- Review by the local authority identified pupils' progress as not consistently good. Financial resources, to strengthen the school's capacity to support those at risk of under-achievement, have been provided by the local authority.
- Senior leaders provide effective role models in their teaching. However, the school recognises the need to provide further opportunities to share strengths of practice to further improve teaching.
- Procedures for managing the performance of teaching are effective. Leaders ensure any pay rewards reflect the most effective teaching and pupils' progress. New staff, including teachers who are newly qualified, benefit from good support and training.
- Senior leaders regularly monitor the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. They are developing middle leadership to share such responsibilities. However, not all leaders have had the opportunity to check the quality of teaching, particularly in mathematics.
- Leaders regularly check the impact of additional help for any disadvantaged pupils as well as disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. Staff work hard to enable pupils to have an equal opportunity to succeed and achieve. Discrimination is challenged and is not tolerated.
- The programme of learning is broad and balanced. Learning Adventures are well planned to engage pupils' interest and motivate. Pupils have many opportunities to reflect on moral issues and key messages about how they should care for others through assemblies and planned learning. The school prepares pupils well for life in modern democratic Britain, as demonstrated by a school assembly on democracy, and nurtures pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development well.
- The school makes good use of primary sport premium, working alongside professional sports coaches to develop staff skills and by providing increased opportunities to take part in a wide range of additional sport.
- Parents are generally positive about the school. However, a few parents felt their children did not make as much progress as they could. The school is aware of the need to accelerate pupils' progress and ensure pupils' needs are met. The focus on writing and mathematics is already strengthening teaching and accelerating progress, demonstrating the school's capacity to improve.
- Child protection and safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The relatively new governing body is fully aware of its responsibilities, including those relating to safeguarding and its role in driving improvements. Governors understand what performance data are telling them and they regularly participate in appropriate training. They provide challenge to the headteacher by asking appropriate and relevant questions about pupils' achievement and what leaders are doing to raise standards. They receive information from the headteacher about how teachers are performing. However, they have not had sufficient opportunities to fully monitor the quality of teaching or the impact of leaders' initiatives in order to be effective in driving improvement. Governors understand how teachers' performance is managed, how any weaker teaching is addressed and good teaching rewarded through the use of pay awards. They are well aware of the impact that staff absences have had on the consistency of teaching. Governors are knowledgeable about how any additional funding, such as pupil premium and the sport premium grant, is being spent and check that it is making a positive difference to pupils' achievement. Governors manage the school's budget effectively. The latest school project has been successfully completed, improving play and learning with the provision of an all-weather pitch.

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

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good; pupils agree. Politeness and good manners are expectations.
- Pupils have a clear understanding of the school's systems of rewards and sanctions. The school's 'Bead treats' which rewards not just good behaviour but also the contribution pupils make to ensuring the school is a pleasant and well-ordered environment demonstrate the importance the school places on its core

values. Special whole school 'Bead treats' such as visits to the park and ice cream, are appreciated by pupils

- Behaviour records are well maintained. Staff use this information effectively to ensure that the needs of individual pupils are well met and managed. Pupils say there are few incidents of weaker behaviour which are managed fairly and consistently by staff.
- In lessons, pupils are keen to learn. They have positive attitudes to their learning. Staff provide a calm and well-managed learning environment in all classes. Relationships between pupils and staff are supportive and respectful. As one pupil said, 'We sometimes take other pupils for a walk along the school's 'well-being walk' which helps to cheer them up.'
- The majority of parents who responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View, agreed the school makes sure pupils behave well and deals effectively with any bullying. Pupils say such incidents are rare and dealt with effectively by staff.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Pupils demonstrate a good awareness of how to keep themselves safe in and around the school and community and when using the internet. Effective procedures are in place to keep pupils safe on and off site, for example on the school's residential visit to Hooke Court.
- Pupils say that discrimination is not tolerated within the school. The school has effective procedures to deal with bullying, including through internet use and social media. Pupils are aware of different kinds of bullying and name calling, but confident they are very rare and that there is always someone they can talk to if they are worried about anything.
- Attendance shows a slight improvement since the last inspection and is now broadly average. The school rigorously follows up absence and any punctuality concerns rigorously.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching has not been effective enough. Since the last inspection, higher-than-average staff absence has hampered leaders' efforts to strengthen teaching. As a result, some pupils have not made enough progress.
- Teachers' expectations of some pupils, particularly the most able, have not been high enough. Teachers do not always use the information they have about the pupils as well as they could. Consequently, activities in some classes are not as challenging as they might be. As a result, pupils' progress is sometimes slowed.
- The teaching of early reading is good. Children in the Reception class and in Year 1 are taught phonics (letters and the sounds they make) well and benefit from a wide range of reading matter available. In later years, pupils apply these reading skills well.
- The teaching of writing is improving. School initiatives, such as Rusper Writes, and the provision of regular grammar, punctuation and spelling activities are showing signs of strengthening writing. However, opportunities for pupils to practise these skills and write in a wide range of subjects are limited.
- School leaders recognised that the teaching of mathematics needed to improve. Strategies to target pupils' individual needs by ability grouping are already accelerating progress. This was best seen in Years 1/2 where pupils were being challenged to use their knowledge and understanding of money to work out complex problems. This level of challenge is building on the good level of development children achieve in the Reception class. However, not all teachers set problem-solving activities that consistently provide sufficient challenge.
- Teaching assistants, including those in the early years, offer good support and challenge for the pupils they have responsibility for. They have good subject knowledge which helps them probe pupils' understanding well, and ask questions to make pupils think more deeply.
- Developments in marking and feedback systems and setting of targets are starting to help pupils understand how and what they need to do to improve their work in order to achieve well. Pupils are provided with regular opportunities to make necessary alterations, such as correcting calculations, spellings or editing their work. As a result, standards in writing and mathematics are improving.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' achievement requires improvement. Since the previous inspection, three years ago, it has not been

good. Pupils made nationally expected progress in reading. However, too few pupils make at least expected progress in writing and mathematics. In addition, some disruption to learning as a result of staff absence left some pupils with gaps in their learning. Pupils are now gradually making up for lost time from weaker progress in previous years.

- Compared to national averages in 2014, the attainment of pupils at the end of Year 6 in writing was below average, broadly average in mathematics and above average in reading.
- The proportion of the most-able pupils achieving higher levels in writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6 was below the national average last year, significantly so in punctuation, spelling and grammar elements of writing, and above average in reading. As a result of the school's focus on improving writing and mathematics, pupils are now making better progress. Work seen in books and school information confirm standards are starting to improve.
- In the 2014 Year 1 phonic screening check, almost all pupils reached standards expected for their age, an improvement on the previous year due to strengthened phonics teaching (letters and sounds). Guided reading for older pupils builds effectively on these early reading skills.
- 2014 Key Stage 1 standards achieved by pupils in reading, writing and mathematics were just below the expected level. The school's own information and inspection evidence show pupils are now making better progress as a result of better teaching.
- The achievement of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is similar to their classmates. Pupils' progress is quickening as a result of teachers' close monitoring of their learning and carefully tailored support.
- There were no Year 6 pupils eligible for support from additional funding in 2014. Throughout the rest of school the very small number of pupils eligible for additional funding make similar progress to their classmates from a variety of different starting points as a result of the care taken to ensure support matches their individual needs.

The early years provision

is good

- Small cohorts of children that join the school vary from year to year. Many join with skills typical for their age. For a few children their literacy skills and understanding of number are weaker than classmates. Through good teaching, they catch up quickly. By the end of the year the majority reach a good level of development.
- Routines and procedures are well established. Parents were full of praise for the way in which their children quickly settle and are encouraged to become confident learners. Children quickly learn the school's expectations of behaviour in lessons and around the school.
- Adults work well together to plan activities that stimulate the curiosity of the children. There is an appropriate balance of activities, which children can select for themselves or are directed by adults. They are enthusiastic learners. Counting on and back using small teddy bears, identifying coins discovered in the sand tray, working out what to spend at the garden centre, building an outdoor shelter and learning to sound out and start to write letters and sounds were just some of the stimulating activities promoting effective learning.
- The children have many opportunities for social interaction. They are thoughtful and caring of each other, taking turns on the computer, helping to put away equipment and 'being kind when someone is upset'.
- The leadership of the early years stage is good. Adults in the class carefully check children's progress. Information used to plan activities helps motivate children and extend learning further.
- The staff ensure children are well cared for and safe. Parents appreciate this care. Safeguarding procedures linked to early years provision are in place and monitored carefully.

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	125850
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	456217

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	102
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Emma Worskett
Headteacher	Deborah Packham
Date of previous school inspection	March 2012
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