

# Dudley Infant Academy

Harold Road, Hastings, East Sussex TN35 5NJ

## Inspection dates

14–15 March 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- The quality of teaching and learning in the school has declined since the predecessor school was inspected. Pupils in key stage 1 do not achieve as well as they should, particularly in writing and mathematics.
- Teaching in key stage 1 is not consistently good. Some teachers do not use assessment well enough to set tasks that meet pupils' needs.
- Recent improvements to the teaching of writing have not yet enabled current pupils to make good progress in this subject.
- Recent changes to the teaching of phonics have not had enough impact. In 2016, not enough Year 1 pupils met the expected standard in the phonics check.
- Pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to solve problems or use reasoning in mathematics, limiting pupils' achievement in this subject.
- Teaching does not challenge the most able pupils. Not enough pupils in Year 2 reached the higher levels last year, particularly in writing and mathematics.

### The school has the following strengths

- Leaders and governors have started to take the right actions to address weaknesses. Staff and parents are confident in this leadership.
- Pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare are good. Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school.
- Children in the Reception classes make good progress and are well prepared for Year 1.
- Pupils feel safe in school. Safeguarding is effective.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' progress, particularly in writing and mathematics in key stage 1, by:
  - ensuring that teachers use information about pupils' attainment to target planning and teaching so that all groups of pupils make rapid progress
  - providing pupils with more opportunities for problem-solving and reasoning in mathematics
  - embedding and refining the new arrangements for the teaching of phonics and writing
  - ensuring that the most able pupils are appropriately challenged.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management of the school, by:
  - ensuring that all governors have a clear and accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the school so that they can hold leaders to account
  - refining systems for teachers' performance management
  - sustaining current improvements in attendance
  - developing effectively the systems recently implemented by leaders to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- A new leadership team has very recently started at the school. The lead principal and acting principal have accurately identified school priorities and are addressing weaknesses swiftly and strategically. They have begun to improve attendance, which has been lower than the national average for the past two years. However, while improvements in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment are developing, there has not been sufficient time for leaders' actions to make a secure impact on outcomes for pupils.
- In the past, procedures for teachers' performance management have not been effective. Targets for improvement have been too general and teachers have not been robustly held to account. As a result, some teaching is not good.
- Last year, leaders did not make good use of the pupil premium grant to ensure effective provision for disadvantaged pupils. As a result, many of these pupils did not achieve as well as others nationally in reading, writing or mathematics. Current disadvantaged pupils are making better progress. However, there is more to do in key stage 1 to diminish the difference between disadvantaged pupils' attainment in mathematics and the attainment of other pupils nationally.
- Leaders' effective management of additional resources ensures that pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress.
- Leaders target sports funding effectively. Pupils benefit from specialist sports teaching and participate in a range of sporting activities which they enjoy. As a result, pupils have a keen understanding of the importance of being healthy and they also have positive attitudes towards physical activity.
- The curriculum is wide ranging and creative, enabling pupils to develop their confidence, motivation and interest in learning. Pupils enjoy 'learning adventures' that link all subjects. For example, in the topic 'Tell me a story!' the children in the Reception classes read a wide range of traditional stories and created 'wanted' posters for the troll in the story of the 'The three billy goats gruff'. Extra-curricular activities further broaden pupils' learning.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well supported by the curriculum. For example, pupils learn about life in other places through a link with a school in Sierra Leone. This has provided valuable enrichment for pupils in considering how other people live. The school's own values promote British values well. Assemblies provide good opportunities for pupils to share and celebrate their learning. As a result, pupils are enthusiastic and engaged during assembly, both as listeners and performers.
- The lead principal and acting principal demonstrate a strong and cohesive partnership. They carry out regular checks on the quality of teaching and learning and provide teachers with appropriate feedback about strengths and areas for development. Evaluations are accurate and highlight clear and appropriate next steps. Consequently, the quality of teaching is beginning to improve.
- Parents have confidence in the new leadership team. The majority feel that the school

is led and managed well. Following a recent open event at the school, parents commented that they have 'recently noticed some brilliant changes'.

- English and mathematics subject leaders are committed and knowledgeable. They use their expertise to provide relevant coaching for teachers. This helps them to ensure that pupils develop important skills in reading, writing and mathematics. Senior leaders have appointed two new English specialists to join the school next term, reflecting their determination to further strengthen teaching.
- Hastings Academies Trust has invested time and finances effectively in order to bring about rapid improvements in the school. The trust has helped to strengthen the senior leadership team and provided additional support with teachers' assessment of pupils' progress. Expert colleagues from other academies across the trust also provide appropriate guidance. As a result, many aspects of the school are now improving at a reasonable pace.

### **Governance of the school**

- Governors take their responsibilities seriously. They work closely with the leadership team and are focused on school improvement. However, not all demonstrate a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development.
- Governors recognise that in 2016 the proportion of pupils in Year 2 that achieved expectations for their age was too low. In response to this, they have devised a clear action plan for improvement to ensure that more pupils achieve these standards in 2017, particularly in writing and mathematics.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Processes to support vulnerable pupils are good. Leaders take seriously their responsibilities to keep children safe. They prioritise pupils' welfare and maintain a culture of vigilance to keep pupils safe.
- Procedures for staff recruitment are robust and up to date. Appropriate checks are carried out and detailed records are kept. Leaders provide high-quality training for staff and governors. All staff have a good understanding of the school's processes for recording and reporting concerns. Leaders ensure that all staff are well informed about the latest safeguarding arrangements.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

### **Requires improvement**

- Teachers do not make consistently effective use of assessment to inform their planning and teaching so that it accurately matches the needs of all pupils. As a result, pupils' achievement, particularly in writing and mathematics, is not good.
- Teaching of mathematics is not as effective as it needs to be. Teachers provide limited opportunities for problem-solving and reasoning for pupils in Years 1 and 2. As a result, achievement in mathematics is not good. Too few of the most able pupils achieve the highest available levels.

- While high levels of challenge are provided for the least able pupils in mathematics, these pupils are not supported well with the skills and strategies required to tackle tasks successfully.
- New systems for teaching phonics have been introduced in Years 1 and 2. However, the new approach has not yet had enough impact on pupils' phonic skills. Some weak readers struggle to use phonics strategies to break down and work out new words. The most able readers can break down words well but lack strategies to derive greater than merely superficial meaning from pictures and text.
- The teaching of writing is not yet good. Although writing skills are taught more systematically than they were previously, teachers do not effectively help pupils to develop their own choice of vocabulary and sentence structure. As a result, pupils do not develop all the writing skills they need and too few achieve the highest available levels.
- The teaching of reading is developing faster than writing and mathematics. The purchase of new books has raised the profile of reading and children are excited by the new homework focus on reading books one band above their level. This challenge has resulted in improved achievement in reading across key stage 1.
- Pupils who join the school part way through the school year are well supported to settle quickly and become involved in school life. Teaching takes their individual needs and circumstances into account well, which enables them to move forward in their learning.
- Pupils are well behaved in lessons and are keen to learn. They are happy to share their work with adults and many pupils spoke to the inspector confidently about their learning.
- Teachers have high expectations for the presentation of pupils' work. Pupils present work well in their English and mathematics books. New systems for handwriting have recently been introduced and the positive impact of this is already evident in pupils' work.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils report that they feel safe in school and can clearly explain why. They understand what bullying is and are clear about what they would do if they were worried about anything. Pupils show positive attitudes about caring for each other.
- Almost all parents felt their child was safe and well cared for in school. The school's curriculum ensures that pupils know how to keep themselves healthy and understand the importance of eating well and taking part in physical exercise.
- Pupils talk with a clear understanding of what healthy food choices are and why it is important to eat healthily. Through the effective use of directed sports funding, pupils have an increased awareness of healthy lifestyles and physical activity. External physical education providers further enhance pupils' understanding.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Staff have high expectations for behaviour and conduct and provide good role models. As a result, pupils show care and respect for classmates and adults. They move around the school sensibly and safely, including when they are not being directly supervised. Inspectors observed children willingly move aside in corridors to allow adults to pass before them. The school has a calm and purposeful atmosphere where all members of the school community work and play together.
- Pupils are polite and well mannered. They are confident to speak in class and collaborate well with classmates during whole-class activities and while working and playing independently. Most pupils demonstrate positive behaviour for learning, applying themselves fully to challenges set. Occasionally, however, when activities are not accurately matched to the needs of pupils, some become distracted.
- The new senior leadership team has only recently implemented new systems for behaviour management. Procedures, including clear sanctions, are already being used consistently by staff, with a positive effect throughout the school. Incidents of poor behaviour have reduced. Almost all parents felt that the school makes sure that pupils are well behaved.
- Overall, absence and persistent absence are high. However, leaders have implemented more robust systems to tackle low attendance, including rewards for good attendance. For example, classes with the highest attendance are celebrated weekly in the newsletter. As a result, attendance is slowly improving.

### Outcomes for pupils

### Requires improvement

- Pupils' achievement in key stage 1 has not been good enough. Over the past three years, pupils' attainment in writing and mathematics has been below the national average. Last year, pupils' attainment in reading was also below the national average.
- In writing and mathematics, the most able pupils do not do as well as they should. In 2016, the proportion who achieved a higher than expected standard for their age was below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who met the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics check has been below the national average for the last three years. However, in 2016 nearly all of the Year 1 pupils who did not reach the expected phonics standard caught up quickly in Year 2 because they received effective targeted support.
- In 2016, disadvantaged pupils in key stage 1 did not achieve as well as others nationally in reading, writing or mathematics. However, the school's assessment information indicates that current disadvantaged pupils are making better progress.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress in reading, often from very low starting points. This is due to the good support that is provided for them through special resources, additional teaching support and good pastoral care.

## Early years provision

**Good**

- Teaching, learning and outcomes for children are better in the early years than elsewhere in the school. The early years leader has an accurate understanding of the setting's priorities and ensures that teaching meets the needs of all children effectively. As a result, children make good progress in the Reception classes across all of the areas of learning.
- Staff promote children's learning well. They talk to them in a helpful way and ask important questions as the children play. Training opportunities, which are carefully focused on the setting's priorities, provide good support for staff.
- The school's assessment information indicates that some children are working with skills that are lower than you would expect for their age when they enter the Reception classes. The early years leader has focused on ensuring that appropriate provision is in place to support and accelerate the learning of children with low starting points and those who are disadvantaged. For example, small fine-motor-skills groups support children well with their writing. As a result, children quickly catch up with their classmates and most are well prepared for Year 1.
- Children eligible for support provided by pupil premium funds make the same good progress as others. Small-group social stories and targeted activities that promote collaboration make a positive impact on achievement. In 2016, the proportion of disadvantaged children who reached a good level of development was above the proportion of other children nationally.
- The indoor learning environment is bright and stimulating. Resources are of a high quality and are easily accessible for children. As a result, children are enthusiastic, confident and independent.
- Children enjoy themselves in the outdoor learning environment, choosing from a range of activities to promote all areas of learning. For example, in the construction area, children were engaged in building a bridge for the Billy Goats Gruff. They talked animatedly about why they needed to keep the baby goat safe from the troll. Targeted questioning by adults further challenged children's thinking and language skills during this activity.
- Children behave well and are eager to join in with activities. Adults model positive relationships effectively. As a result, children share resources and are kind and caring towards each other.
- Effective procedures are in place to keep children safe. Adults pay careful attention to children's safety and welfare.

## School details

Unique reference number	140311
Local authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	10024555

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Infant
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	5 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	177
Appropriate authority	Hastings Academies Trust
Chair	Holly Mayatt
Principal	Jane Ireland
Telephone number	01424 422981
Website	<a href="http://www.dudleyinfantacademy.org.uk">www.dudleyinfantacademy.org.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:office@dudleyinfantacademy.org.uk">office@dudleyinfantacademy.org.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- Dudley Infant Academy is a smaller than average infant school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be disadvantaged and eligible for the pupil premium is similar to the national average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is lower than the national average. Few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is similar to the national average.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.

- The principal is on long-term leave. Interim leadership is in place in the form of a lead principal and an acting principal; they are sharing leadership of the school in the principal's absence.
- The school converted to become an academy in November 2013, joining the Hastings Academies Trust. When the school was inspected prior to this in February 2013 it was judged as good.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors carried out observations of teaching and learning in all key stages, most of which were conducted jointly with the lead principal and acting principal.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, leaders of English and mathematics, the leader of early years and the special educational needs coordinator. A meeting was also held with three representatives from the Hastings Academies Trust, together with three members of the trust's local governing body.
- Inspectors held discussions with pupils and were available to speak to parents on the playground and also took into account responses from Parent View. Parental responses to an open event at the school were also considered.
- A range of documents was examined, including the school's information about pupils' attainment and progress and records concerning pupils' attendance, behaviour and safety.

## Inspection team

Luisa Gould, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Martin Garratt	Ofsted Inspector
Timothy Rome	Ofsted Inspector

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