

# Downsbrook Primary School

Dominion Road, Worthing, West Sussex BN14 8GD

## Inspection dates

26–27 September 2017

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Inadequate
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Inadequate
Outcomes for pupils	Inadequate
Early years provision	Inadequate
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an inadequate school

- Safeguarding is not effective. Effective reporting systems are not in place. Staff lack training and, consequently, are unaware of their statutory duties. Pupils' absences are not followed up reliably.
- Over time, leaders, including governors, have wrongly believed the school's effectiveness to be better than it is. Consequently, they have not secured much-needed improvements.
- Pupils underachieve considerably. They make slow progress in English and mathematics. Teachers expect too little of pupils.
- Weak teaching over time has contributed to pupils' lack of engagement, and persistent low-level disruption in lessons.
- The teaching of mathematics is poor. Pupils do not acquire the necessary skills that are appropriate for their age.
- Younger pupils' knowledge and understanding of how to keep themselves safe online is weak because the teaching of online safety is not effective.
- Leaders and teachers do not have an accurate view of how well pupils are doing. As a result, teaching fails to meet the needs of pupils, particularly the most able.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to develop their literacy and numeracy skills in different subjects and contexts.
- Leaders do not make effective use of the pupil premium. Governors' monitoring of the difference made by this spending is weak, including in the early years.
- Disadvantaged pupils, and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, miss too much school. Disadvantaged pupils experience a high rate of exclusion. This means that they make less progress than they should.
- Leaders' and teachers' support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities lacks focus. As a result, these pupils' individual needs are not consistently met.
- The current leadership arrangements of the school are temporary and are not sufficient to drive the necessary improvement.

### The school has the following strengths

- The new interim headteacher and senior leaders have begun to take action to halt the decline of the school.
- Most children make strong progress in the early years and are prepared well for Year 1.

## Full report

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

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

- Establish an effective culture of keeping children safe by:
  - urgently following up all outstanding safeguarding referrals to ensure that no pupil is at risk of harm
  - ensuring that all adults are aware of their individual responsibilities to keep children safe, and know what to do if they have a concern about a pupil
  - providing all staff with high-quality safeguarding training appropriate to their different roles, and evaluating how well this training supports effective practice across the school
  - ensuring that all pupils gain sufficient knowledge and understanding of how to keep themselves safe, including online
  - identifying and acting on attendance concerns promptly, particularly for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Rapidly raise standards of teaching, learning and assessment, to eradicate low-level disruption and improve outcomes, by:
  - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve
  - ensuring that teachers use information about pupils' starting points effectively, to plan suitable work to develop the knowledge, understanding and skills of all groups of pupils, including the most able, and to engage all pupils in their learning
  - ensuring that teaching successfully supports the progress of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils
  - providing pupils with effective opportunities to develop their reasoning and problem-solving skills in mathematics and across the wider curriculum.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management, in order to achieve urgent and secure improvement, by:
  - rapidly developing the skills and capacity of leaders at all levels
  - robustly monitoring the quality of teaching and learning across the school and taking effective action to improve pupils' outcomes
  - ensuring that exclusion systems do not disadvantage any particular groups of pupils
  - ensuring that governors hold school leaders fully to account to secure improvement, including the effective use of pupil premium funding.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in

order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.  
The school should not appoint newly qualified teachers.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Inadequate

- Leaders have not effectively addressed the areas for improvement in the previous inspection report. Standards remain too low and pupils make limited progress. The quality of education that the school provides is poor.
- Governors and the local authority failed to act swiftly in addressing the evident shortcomings in leadership over time. Consequently, actions to improve the quality of education for pupils were slow to start and poor practice has become deep-rooted.
- The existing senior leadership team are heavily reliant on external support to help them take effective action on areas that need improving urgently. Even with this additional support, leaders have been unable to secure the necessary improvements to the quality of teaching across the school.
- Leaders have not ensured that the academic curriculum is suitably challenging. It does not develop pupils' literacy and mathematical skills systematically. As a result, pupils do not develop a full range of writing and reasoning skills.
- Leaders' assessment of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is not effective. Teaching assistants do not have suitable training, so do not know how to support these pupils to make effective progress. Leaders' use of special educational needs funding is inadequate.
- Middle leaders have received training from local authority advisers in assessment and reporting. This has helped leaders with their monitoring but has focused too little on how well pupils actually learn during lessons. As a result, the impact of this monitoring on pupils' progress is minimal.
- Performance management systems are not in place. As a result, staff do not receive training, support or guidance that links closely to improving pupils' outcomes. Consequently, the overall quality of teaching and learning across the school has not improved.
- Leaders and governors do not check carefully enough whether their spending of pupil premium funding makes the difference they hoped it would. As a result, disadvantaged pupils do not make the same progress as their peers in English or mathematics.
- The use of sports premium funding provides a wider range of sporting activities and access to gymnastics equipment. Pupils enjoy attending football clubs and residential trips. However, leaders do not monitor and evaluate this work in sufficient detail to establish its impact on pupils' participation.
- The current interim headteacher took up post in September 2017, supported by two senior leaders who at the time were teachers at the school. Together, they have brought about a sense of enthusiasm to move the school forward that is recognised by staff and parents. However, many of the recent initiatives and systems in the school, such as the monitoring of teaching and learning, are too new to have had a measurable impact.
- Middle leaders have a determination to improve the quality of teaching across the school, and together they form a cohesive team. They are aware of what they

need to do to drive forward improvements and are starting to implement plans to support this. However, this is a recent development and, as yet, their impact is not measurable.

- The school provides a wide range of extra-curricular clubs and after-school sessions to support and enrich pupils' learning. For instance, the school holds musical theatre, reading, choir and multi-skills clubs that encourage many aspects of pupils' personal development.
- Pupils have taken part in a broad range of activities that encourage them to reflect on others' behaviour and the differences between cultures. For example, Year 6 pupils have engaged in a mock criminal trial. This enabled them to reflect on the impact of offences on the victim and explore the justice system further. This kind of activity helps to prepare pupils well for life in modern Britain.
- The small proportion of parents who responded to Parent View, and those parents inspectors met during the inspection, feel that their children are happy at school.

## **Governance of the school**

- Over time, governors have not held school leaders effectively to account. The standard of education across the school has declined since the last inspection. Governors did not take successful action to challenge leaders to establish better teaching and learning and improve pupils' outcomes.
- A high proportion of the governing body are new to post, including the chair of governors and, more recently, the vice-chair of governors. There is a clear action plan in place for the development of the governing body. Although in its early stages, governors have begun to improve the level of challenge they offer to leaders.
- Governors have access to appropriate training and resources provided by the local authority and have a good range of experience that equips them well for their role. Records of governors' meetings provide evidence that they are aware of the areas of improvement needed across the school. Governors have recently implemented actions to start to address these areas.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.
- Previous senior leaders did not follow up all child protection referrals properly. Current leaders have started to address this, but there are still a number of outstanding referrals that need following up. This puts some past and present pupils at risk.
- Leaders do not have sufficient oversight of what safeguarding training is in place. Consequently, they cannot check whether training fully meets the safeguarding needs of the pupils.
- Leaders' responses to behaviour incidents focus on the sanctions they deem necessary. However, leaders fail to identify any possible underlying issues that could be of a safeguarding nature. For example, inspectors found occasions where pupils' concerning behaviours were not referred on to the appropriate agencies.

- Systems to monitor the attendance of pupils are ineffective. There is a risk of pupils going missing from education without being identified, thus failing to trigger the appropriate action that might be needed.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

## Inadequate

- The quality of teaching has declined since the previous inspection. Frequent changes in staffing mean that some classes have had many changes of teacher over the past year. Temporary arrangements are in place to cover some of the senior leaders' teaching responsibilities. As a result, not all teachers know their pupils well and activities do not stretch and challenge pupils appropriately.
- Teachers' planning is weak. The assessments of pupils' prior learning that teachers use when planning lessons are inaccurate. Teaching and tasks do not cater well for pupils of different abilities, including pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and the most able. Consequently, teaching fails to meet pupils' needs and their progress is slow.
- Teachers' expectations for what pupils can achieve across a number of subjects are too low. Pupils are not sufficiently challenged to make strong progress, particularly in mathematics. Therefore, they fail to reach the standards expected for their age by the end of key stage 2.
- Too often, the pace of learning is slow due to the type of activities that are provided for pupils. Prolonged periods of waiting during lessons are not productive and this hinders pupils' progress.
- Mathematics lessons in all key stages do not routinely develop pupils' problem-solving or reasoning skills effectively. Pupils' books show that they are not given the opportunity to develop and apply their knowledge, and develop mastery of an area, before moving on.
- Teachers do not provide sufficient support to improve pupils' spelling. High-frequency words are consistently misspelled throughout pupils' work and this does not improve over time.
- In English lessons at key stage 2, the teaching of grammar does not allow pupils to apply what they learn. The impact of this is that pupils are not able to use these grammatical skills successfully in their own writing.
- The teaching of science in key stage 2 is poor. Too frequently, pupils do not have an opportunity to apply their writing and mathematics skills in this subject. Consequently, pupils' subject-specific vocabulary and practical enquiry skills are not developing sufficiently to prepare them for the next stage of their education.
- Teachers' feedback is not in line with the school's assessment policy. In some classes, teachers are beginning to offer constructive advice, although pupils do not always reflect on or follow it. Similarly, verbal feedback during lessons varies considerably in quality from class to class.
- Low-level disruption by pupils is evident in most lessons, especially where teaching does not engage, stimulate or inspire. Pupils lose focus and become distracted easily, which has a negative impact on their own and others' learning.

- In some lessons, the support given to pupils from teaching assistants is well organised and increases pupils' engagement. Staff are positive about the recent focus on improving teaching and learning across the school and feel clear about the messages they are given by new senior leaders.
- Parents and pupils spoken to or surveyed are satisfied with the amount and content of homework the school provides and feel that it contributes well to their learning.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

## Inadequate

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is inadequate. This is because safeguarding is not effective. Weaknesses in staff training, their understanding of their responsibilities to keep children safe, and leaders' failure to manage child protection referrals mean that pupils' welfare is not assured.
- The deployment of staff at breaktimes does not support pupils' safety effectively. Pupils are able to access unsuitable areas of the school grounds and then remain there for periods without staff noticing.
- Pupils' understanding of how to keep themselves safe online is inconsistent. The school does not emphasise this aspect of the curriculum strongly enough outside of Year 6. Consequently, younger pupils have very limited knowledge of how to protect themselves when using the internet.
- Most pupils have a clear understanding of what constitutes right or wrong behaviour. Pupils in Year 6 have engaged with the work of a local magistrate's scheme. This included taking part in a mock trial, which enabled pupils to reflect on the impact of crime on the victim. They also show an awareness of the consequences of unacceptable and illegal behaviour.
- Pupils understand that bullying is wrong and state that it rarely happens. They have a clear understanding of the consequences of bullying and are confident that teachers will deal with any issues should they arise. However, leaders do not have a current overview of bullying across the school. They are therefore unable to identify any repeated victims or perpetrators of this behaviour or put strategies in place to prevent it.
- The views expressed by the majority of the small sample of parents who responded to Parent View, and those parents that inspectors spoke to at the school gate, confirm that their children feel well cared for at school.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is inadequate. Weak teaching results in persistent low-level disruption from pupils during lessons. All too often, pupils ignore adults' instructions and struggle to remain focused during activities.
- Disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities have higher rates of exclusion compared with their peers. Leaders have not put into

place effective strategies to prevent repeated exclusions for these pupils.

- Internal exclusion logs do not have sufficient detail in order to analyse any patterns or trends over time. This means that strategies to reduce the number of internal exclusions across the school are not in place.
- Leaders apply the school's behaviour policy consistently across the school. However, the hierarchy of sanctions does not allow for any consideration of the context of an incident to take place. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are therefore more likely to receive sanctions for their behaviour.
- Rates of absence for disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are too high. This has affected the amount of progress these pupils have made, as they have missed the teaching of key concepts and have not received support to help them catch up.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Inadequate

- The majority of pupils in key stages 1 and 2 do not progress well in English and mathematics. The most able pupils are given limited scope to deepen their knowledge and understanding or refine their skills. As a result, the proportion of pupils reaching the higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics is well below the national average.
- Pupils in key stage 2, particularly the most able, achieve lower standards and make slower progress in mathematics than in reading and writing. Pupils are unclear how to improve their efforts and what they need to do next to achieve success. They have little opportunity to extend their mathematical skills beyond the use of operations and into reasoning. This is preventing pupils from making the progress that they should.
- In key stage 1, pupils' progress in writing is weak. Work in their books shows that many are working at a standard below what is expected for their age. Some pupils do not have regular enough opportunities to write in different subjects. Pupils' presentation and handwriting skills are poor.
- Disadvantaged pupils are not catching up quickly enough. Pupils who fall behind, especially in key stage 2, are not supported well enough to make strong progress. Differences between their attainment and that of their peers are not closing. Leaders do not make enough use of additional funding to ensure that disadvantaged pupils receive suitable support to overcome any barriers to learning.
- Staff have not had sufficient training to support pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities effectively. As a result, their skills and expertise are underdeveloped and the additional support they have offered has not effectively addressed pupils' needs and enabled them to catch up.
- Pupils in key stage 1 enjoy reading and are encouraged to read at home. The most able pupils read books that challenge them and increase their vocabulary. However, some pupils are not able to read with fluency by the end of Year 2, and therefore struggle to find the meaning behind the text.

## Early years provision

## Inadequate



- Early years provision is inadequate because safeguarding is not effective. Although some children feel safe in the Reception classes, weaknesses in staff knowledge and lapses in training mean that this may not be the case. Staff are unsure of the correct procedures for reporting safeguarding concerns and not all staff have received the appropriate safeguarding training.
- Teaching in the early years is stronger than elsewhere in the school. Children enter the Reception Year with knowledge and skills that are at least typical for their age. Children make strong progress, and a high proportion achieve a good level of development at the end of the early years. Most children are well prepared to start Year 1.
- Teachers have developed the indoor and outdoor areas to provide inspiring learning opportunities that capture children's interest and stimulate their curiosity. Children are happy to learn as they investigate and explore. The curriculum offers a broad range of experiences that challenge them well to think for themselves and develop their knowledge and skills.
- Teachers enable children's learning effectively through appropriate questioning and ongoing assessment. Teaching assistants do not always replicate this, however, and their interventions to support children are sometimes too slow.
- Children behave well and show kindness to one another. They cooperate well and there is a calm atmosphere in the classroom and outdoors. Children know the class routines well and move swiftly from one activity to another. They listen attentively to teachers and follow instructions quickly.
- Outcomes in early years are improving, with the proportion of children achieving a good level of development above that seen nationally last year. However, the proportion of disadvantaged children achieving this level of development is well below national figures. The funding received through the pupil premium is not being used effectively to address this.
- The early years leader has a sound understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement across the provision. Actions to improve specific areas, such as the discrepancies between the proportions of girls and boys reaching the expected standard in writing, are identified quickly. However, the impact of these actions are not evaluated with sufficient rigour.

## School details

Unique reference number	125894
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	10036937

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 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	360
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Stella Turner
Headteacher	Jon Parsons
Telephone number	01903 230467
Website	<a href="http://www.downsbrook.w-sussex.sch.uk">www.downsbrook.w-sussex.sch.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:office@downsbrook.w-sussex.sch.uk">office@downsbrook.w-sussex.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	9–10 July 2015

## Information about this school

- Downsbrook is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language are below average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils, those who are supported by pupil premium funding, is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average.
- Pupil mobility is below average.
- The school offers a breakfast and after-school club which is run by an external provider.
- The interim headteacher started in September 2017 alongside two internally promoted senior leaders.

- The school is receiving support from an existing headteacher at a local primary school for the equivalent of one day per week.
- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about the curriculum, pupil premium funding, sports premium funding, charging and remissions, equality of opportunity or complaints on its website.
- The school does not meet the government's current floor standard, which sets out the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6.
- The school meets the government's definition of a coasting school.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited all classes during the inspection to observe teaching and learning. The majority of these visits were carried out jointly with senior leaders.
- When visiting classrooms, inspectors observed parts of the lessons that were taking place, but focused particularly on gathering evidence about what teaching and learning is typically like over time. This included scrutinising the work in pupils' books and on display, talking with them about their learning and hearing them read.
- Inspectors also took the school's assessments of pupils' progress into account and considered leaders' and external visitors' evaluations about the quality of teaching over time.
- Inspectors met formally and informally with a wide range of people to gather further evidence. This included meetings with pupils, parents, staff, school leaders, governors and representatives of the local authority.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of the school's documentation and records, including particular scrutiny of those relating to safeguarding.
- Inspectors took account of responses to the Ofsted online surveys of pupils' and staff views. Inspectors considered 43 responses to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View, which included 40 written comments. Views from parents, staff and pupils were also gathered informally and formally throughout the inspection and considered alongside this evidence.

## Inspection team

Emma Sanderson, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Timothy Rome	Ofsted Inspector
Lesley Fisher-Pink	Ofsted Inspector

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