

Rye Community Primary School

The Grove, Rye, East Sussex TN31 7ND

Inspection dates

24–30 January 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Trustees and leaders have not used pupil premium funding appropriately to improve the outcomes of disadvantaged pupils in key stages 1 and 2.
- In the majority of year groups current disadvantaged pupils are falling further behind their peers in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teaching does not meet the needs of disadvantaged pupils, or those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities, consistently well.
- Over time, weak leadership has led to a decline in the quality of teaching and outcomes for groups of pupils.
- A significant amount of assessment information is inaccurate. As a result, teachers cannot plan learning effectively to help pupils catch up. Leaders cannot check pupils' progress accurately.
- There are weaknesses in the teaching of mathematics.
- In the past, middle leaders were not given enough opportunities to take responsibility for aspects of the school's work such as the quality of the curriculum.
- Those responsible for governance have been too slow to tackle leaders about declining standards.
- Trustees' and leaders' evaluations of the school's effectiveness are too generous.

The school has the following strengths

- Children make a great start to school life in the early years provision. Strong leadership and very effective teaching help children, including those who are disadvantaged, to make rapid progress.
- Pupils enjoy school and behave well. Attendance is improving.
- Current leaders have led recent improvements in attendance, behaviour and outcomes for pupils in key stage 1. There is evidence of growing capacity to make further improvements.
- Safeguarding is effective. Leaders work well with families and other professionals to keep pupils safe from harm.

Full report

In accordance with section 44(2) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Trustees and leaders should take urgent action to improve the outcomes for disadvantaged pupils in key stages 1 and 2 by ensuring that:
 - there is a well-thought-out and evidenced pupil premium strategy
 - all specific pupil premium funding is used to improve the outcomes for disadvantaged pupils
 - leaders and teachers plan and implement strategies that will help disadvantaged pupils catch up with their peers in reading, writing and mathematics
 - trustees regularly monitor and evaluate the use of the pupil premium funding to check it is successfully being used for its intended purpose.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment so it is at least good by:
 - ensuring that assessment information is accurate
 - using assessment information to plan learning that meets the needs of, and challenges, all groups of pupils
 - tracking the progress of pupils from their starting points to check that those who have fallen behind are catching up and that the most able are challenged
 - further developing teachers' practice when teaching mathematics so that learning includes an appropriate balance of fluency, problem solving and reasoning to help pupils deepen their mathematical understanding
 - checking that pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are given appropriate work and have the opportunity to work regularly with teachers as well as teaching assistants.
- Improve leadership and management so it is at least good by:
 - ensuring that trustees systematically hold senior leaders to account for pupils' outcomes
 - using a range of strategies to accurately evaluate the quality of teaching over time
 - refining self-evaluation processes so they take greater account of the outcomes for different groups of pupils currently in the school, including those who are disadvantaged or have SEN and/or disabilities
 - enhancing the provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities so that they make good progress both in class and during any additional interventions
 - making sure all middle leaders have the necessary skills and experience to fulfil their roles successfully.

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.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- Leaders and those responsible for governance have not used pupil premium funding appropriately. The majority of the additional funding (approximately £220,000 per annum) has been used to supplement general staffing costs. The funding has not been focused on improving outcomes for disadvantaged pupils in key stages 1 and 2. As a result, in the majority of current year groups, disadvantaged pupils are falling further behind their peers in reading, writing and mathematics.
- In contrast, the much smaller amount of early years premium funding has been used very effectively to improve outcomes for disadvantaged children. The leader responsible for this effective work has very recently taken oversight of pupil premium funding across the school. She has a clear understanding of what needs to be done and the desire to do it to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils.
- Weak leadership of teaching and learning has led to a decline in the quality of teaching over time. In the past, leaders have not given teachers precise feedback to help them improve their teaching.
- Leaders have not focused on the progress of pupils from different groups when evaluating the effectiveness of the school. They have not considered how well disadvantaged pupils are doing, or how well pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are supported to make progress, during their evaluations of the effectiveness of teaching.
- In the past, middle leaders have had limited opportunities to lead their areas of responsibility. Their roles have very recently been reviewed; however, unreliable assessment information prevents them from evaluating the impact of some of their work.
- Some subject leaders do not have the knowledge, skills or experience to lead their subject effectively. As a result, teaching is less effective in those subjects.
- However, other leaders have been more successful. For example, leaders responsible for English have overseen improved outcomes in both the Year 1 phonics screening check and the reading and writing outcomes at the end of key stage 1. They have introduced a consistent approach to teaching writing across the school and demonstrate the capacity to make further improvements.
- Staff work together very well to do their best for the pupils. In recent times, they have taken more ownership and begun to lead improvements for themselves. These include improvements to pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- Interim leaders have the highest levels of honesty and integrity. They are helping staff and middle leaders to thrive now that they have ensured that staff receive greater clarity about their roles. This has set in motion a clear momentum for improvement.
- The curriculum is rich and gives pupils a wide range of experiences. It is most successful where very effective use is made of local geography or history to bring learning to life. Art and physical education (PE) are extremely popular with pupils because specialist teachers and coaches help pupils to develop their skills very well.

- The PE and sport premium has been used successfully to engage pupils in a wider range of sports and to increase participation in competitive sport. Pupils have regular PE and swimming sessions, and told inspectors they would like even more.
- There is a strong team ethos and sense of community at the school. Pupils are supportive and tolerant of each other and respect each other's differences. The clear focus on respect reminds pupils to 'treat others as you wish to be treated'.

Governance of the school

- Following an inspection of another school in the Rye Academy Trust last year, a review of the trust's governance was recommended. As a result of the review, the chief executive officer replaced many of the trustees and disbanded the local governing body. A new trust board has been in place since October 2017.
- Those responsible for governance have not challenged senior leaders about the school's effectiveness. In particular, inspection evidence demonstrated that former governors and former and present trustees did not know enough about: the accuracy of assessment information; pupil premium spending; the quality of teaching; and provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities.
- The focus of the chief executive officer and trustees has been on the financial stability of the trust. Very recently, new trustees are starting to have an impact, for example by strengthening safeguarding procedures across the trust and through their thorough determination to improve attendance.
- In November 2017, the trust commissioned the local authority to carry out a helpful leadership review because it had concerns about aspects of leadership.
- Very recently, the trust has acted swiftly to put in place interim leadership arrangements that have allowed the school to continue to operate smoothly, albeit with significant weaknesses. Trustees have commissioned an external consultant, who has helped them to strengthen their monitoring procedures.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The trust has strengthened safeguarding procedures by setting up a safeguarding working group across its schools. This means that leaders responsible for safeguarding can work with families seamlessly while they are in the primary and/or secondary schools. The school works well with parents and other professionals to keep pupils safe.
- All required checks are completed on staff and recorded appropriately. Staff are well trained. There is a culture of watching and listening to pupils to help keep them safe. Pupils say that adults listen to them and act on their concerns.
- Many pupils join and leave the school at different times. Processes to ensure that children are not missing from education are strong.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- Leaders admit that some assessment information is inaccurate. Different teachers apply the school's assessment system in a variety of ways. This leads to inaccuracies in whole-school assessment information.
- This weak assessment practice prevents teachers from planning learning that builds carefully on what pupils can already do. As a result, some pupils receive work that is too easy, and others have work that is too difficult.
- Frequently, pupils who need to catch up or have SEN and/or disabilities work separately with a teaching assistant. While teaching assistants are kind and dedicated, not all have the necessary skills to help pupils to make the rapid progress needed in order to catch up. Leaders confirmed that these most vulnerable pupils rarely work on focused tasks with a teacher and are underachieving.
- Despite recent training for teachers, in some classes the teaching of mathematics has significant weaknesses. There are not enough opportunities for pupils to problem solve or reason, and work for the most able is too easy. When pupils make errors teachers do not help them to understand where they went wrong and how to improve. As a result, some pupils do not make the progress they are capable of.
- However, the teaching of mathematics is stronger in some classes. This inconsistent picture in the quality of teaching can be found throughout the school and in different subjects. This is because in the past there has not been an accurate strategic overview of the quality of teaching. Teachers who need to improve have not received appropriate support until recently.
- There is greater consistency in the teaching of reading and writing. Classrooms are rich in language and vocabulary, especially in key stage 1. Phonics is taught accurately and pupils can be seen applying their phonics knowledge when trying to spell tricky words in their writing. Leaders use separate and accurate assessment information to track progress in phonics and this helps to set high expectations and speeds up pupils' progress.
- Older pupils are beginning to develop some resilience as learners and try more challenging problems. The most able readers make strong progress and read books from a wide range of genres.
- Where teaching is most effective, teachers use well-chosen questions to deepen pupils' thinking. The most skilled teachers adapt tasks during lessons to make sure everyone is challenged.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils know that adults in the school care deeply about their safety, happiness and well-being. They feel confident to talk to adults if they have any problems.
- There are many opportunities for pupils to take on additional responsibilities. Pupils

apply formally to become head or deputy head girl or boy. There are also democratic elections for pupils to join the children's leadership team. These opportunities serve to prepare pupils well for their responsibilities as citizens in the local community and in modern-day Britain.

- Pupils are clear about what bullying is and what it is not. Pupils say there is little or no bullying, but that if it were to occur adults will sort it out. The school's sharp focus on online safety helps keep pupils safe from cyber bullying and other online dangers.
- Most pupils take pride in their work by presenting it neatly even when tasks are not challenging or interesting.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are polite and friendly. They behave well in lessons and demonstrate that they are 'Rye smart'. As one pupil explained: 'Children are respectful to teachers and teachers are respectful to children.' Occasional minor off-task behaviour only really occurs where the teaching is not challenging enough.
- Around the school behaviour is good. In the dining hall, the youngest children and pupils enjoy the 'family lunch' where they sit with a trusted adult who models good manners and stimulates conversation. In the playground, pupils enjoy a happy and sociable time together. Very occasionally their play is too rough or boisterous.
- Attendance has been a weakness in the past. This year, trustees and all school staff have made a concerted effort to promote the importance of regular attendance. As a result, the attendance of all groups of pupils is improving. Overall attendance is currently in line with the latest known national average.
- Persistent absence, which was very high, is reducing. This is because the school is, rightly, challenging families when pupils do not attend regularly. As a result, attendance for the vast majority of these pupils has now improved. Staff responsible for monitoring attendance have now turned their attention to improving punctuality and are already having an impact on reducing lateness.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- In most year groups, disadvantaged pupils are falling further behind their peers in reading, writing and mathematics. Additional funding has not been used effectively to help them to keep up or catch up.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities sometimes make poor progress because the work they are given or the support they receive does not help them to learn well.
- Leaders do not know if pupils in key stage 2 who have fallen behind are catching up, or if the most able are being challenged enough. This is because assessment and tracking information is unreliable.
- In 2017, pupils, including the most able and the disadvantaged, did not attain the same standards as other pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2. Attainment in reading was especially weak, with disadvantaged

pupils making poor progress across the key stage.

- Current Year 6 pupils, especially those who are disadvantaged, are working below the standards expected for their age. This is because they have fallen behind due to weaker teaching in the past.
- The progress of current pupils throughout the school in mathematics and science is too variable. This relates directly to the inconsistent quality of teaching in these subjects.
- Pupils in key stage 1 make stronger progress over time. Outcomes in the phonics screening check have improved and match national averages. In 2017, the proportion of pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 1 matched the national average. The proportion of pupils exceeding this standard and working at a greater depth of understanding exceeded national averages.
- Pupils make excellent progress in art and attain very well. Pupils also deepen their knowledge, understanding and skills in history and geography very well, particularly when topics relate to the local area.

Early years provision

Good

- The ambitious and effective early years leader has developed a team that puts children first. There is a clear focus on learning and progress throughout the provision and, as a result, children achieve well. Staff are knowledgeable because of the good training and professional development they receive.
- The strong focus on personal, social and emotional development leads to children behaving positively in Nursery and Reception.
- In the Nursery, the youngest children are helped to settle by their key person. Clear routines help children, including those with little or no language yet, to thrive. Staff are well attuned to the needs of each individual. Stories and rhymes are used well to support the language development of the youngest children.
- In Reception, children are confident to talk about their learning with trusted visitors. There are high levels of engagement. Children take turns and become independent in their learning. They show imagination and resilience, for example when building a giant rocket out of crates.
- Adults use questioning well to encourage children to explore ideas and deepen their learning. Adults work with focused groups of children to develop early writing and number skills. However, the quality of these interventions can vary depending on the experience and expertise of the adult. Phonics is taught well in Reception.
- Children in Reception make strong progress from their starting points. Those children that have attended the school Nursery do even better. The proportion of children who achieve a good level of development at the end of Reception is above that found nationally. As a result, children are very well prepared for Year 1.
- The early years premium is used effectively. Gaps in achievement for the youngest disadvantaged children have been identified, and targeted support put in place to help them to catch up. Additional funding is also used to support home learning. Tasks to promote children's physical development are sent home and the extra practice is

leading to improved outcomes.

- Procedures to keep children safe are highly effective. Routines to care for the youngest children are fit for purpose and sensitively implemented.

School details

Unique reference number	141807
Local authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	10040730

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	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	425
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Stephen Ward
Headteacher	Jane Howard
Telephone number	01797 222 825
Website	www.ryeprimary.co.uk
Email address	office@ryeprimary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Rye Community Primary School joined the Rye Academy Trust as an academy in March 2015. The Rye Academy Trust consists of Rye Community Primary School, Rye College and Rye Studio School. The current chief executive officer of the trust was appointed in September 2016.
- Following an inspection at Rye Studio School, the Rye Academy Trust carried out a review of governance. As a result of this, the local governing bodies of each of the three schools were disbanded in October 2017 and a new group of trustees appointed to oversee all the schools in the trust.
- The trust has received a financial warning notice from the Education and Skills Funding Agency. As a result, all of the trust's schools have been directed by the Department for Education to join another trust by September 2018.
- The headteacher was absent during the inspection. The deputy headteacher was acting

headteacher during the first part of the inspection; however, she was unavoidably absent during the second part of the inspection. During the second part of the inspection, the school was led by a seconded interim leader supported by the early years leader who had been promoted to the role of acting deputy headteacher. The SENCo was new to the school, starting only during the week of the inspection.

- The trust brokered the services of an interim leader from the local authority for six weeks. Trustees had also brokered the services of a leadership consultant through the local authority.
- The school has two classes in each year group from Reception to Year 6. The Nursery class includes provision for two-year-olds.
- Two fifths of the pupils are disadvantaged. This is much greater than the national average.
- There are slightly more pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities in this school than in primary schools nationally.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection began as a one-day Section 8 inspection. During that inspection, the lead inspector had significant concerns about the effectiveness of leadership and management. The inspection was converted to a full Section 5 inspection that took place at the start of the following week.
- Inspectors observed learning in every class at least once and also made a number of shorter visits to classrooms. During these visits to classrooms, inspectors talked to pupils about their work and looked at their books. Over half of these observations were carried out with the school's acting leaders.
- During the inspection, inspectors met regularly with the school's acting and interim leaders. They also met with the chief executive officer of the trust on three occasions and with trustees twice. Inspectors held two telephone conversations with a representative of the local authority and met with a local authority leadership consultant who has been commissioned by the trust to work with the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with a range of middle leaders during the inspection and met with a small group of teachers who asked to speak to them. They also considered 29 responses to the confidential online staff questionnaire.
- To gain the views of pupils, inspectors spoke to pupils informally in lessons, around the school and on the playground at lunchtime and breaktime. Inspectors also met more formally with two groups of pupils and heard some pupils from Year 2 and Year 6 read. Inspectors also considered the 71 responses to the online pupil survey.
- Inspectors spoke to parents before school and considered 54 responses to the online survey, Parent View, including 12 free-text comments.

Inspection team

Lee Selby, lead inspector (29–30 January)	Her Majesty's Inspector
Mark Cole (29–30 January)	Her Majesty's Inspector
Amanda Gard (29 January)	Ofsted Inspector
Clive Close, lead inspector (24 January)	Her Majesty's Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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