

Georgian Gardens Community Primary School

Guildford Road, Rustington, Littlehampton, West Sussex BN16 3JJ

Inspection dates

1–2 May 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Teachers do not consistently or systematically challenge pupils in the work they set them and the questions they ask them. As a result, many pupils, and the most able pupils in particular, do not attain as well as they should.
- Too often, pupils are not set enough work to do. As a result, they finish quickly and their time is not used productively.
- When this happens, pupils sometimes struggle to behave appropriately. During the inspection, some pupils were observed to be chatting or otherwise disengaged, often when learning did not challenge them.
- Progress across the school is now improving. However, the low starting points in some year groups mean that pupils have some way to go to attain the standards expected for their age in English and mathematics. Expectations of spelling are not high enough and pupils do not routinely extend their mathematical skills through investigation and problem solving.
- Some subject leaders are not sufficiently aspirational for their subjects and lack the detailed understanding of progress needed to drive improvement.
- Governors have developed a range of new approaches to ensure that they have the information they need to hold leaders to account. However, many of these systems are at very early stages and are not fully effective.

The school has the following strengths

- Since her arrival in January 2018, the new headteacher has set about driving improvement with energy, focus and determination. Staff, parents and carers have already seen positive changes. Morale is high and there is optimism for the future.
- Pupils' welfare is at the heart of this caring school. Pupils who need a listening ear or have worries are supported effectively. This helps to ensure that everyone is included and happy at Georgian Gardens.
- The teaching of phonics is systematic and effective. In 2017, a higher proportion of pupils than seen nationally attained the required standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check.
- Children get off to a good start in the early years. They are excited by their learning, which is planned in response to their interests. Staff are highly skilled and extend children's thinking effectively. As a result, children make strong progress from their starting points and are well prepared for Year 1.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that teachers match work appropriately to pupils' needs by providing activities and asking questions that challenge all pupils, but particularly the most able.
- Raise attainment across the school in English and mathematics, particularly for the most able pupils, by:
 - improving pupils' spelling skills and consistent use of correct grammatical conventions
 - providing increased opportunities for pupils to apply reasoning and problem-solving skills in mathematics.
- Develop leadership skills to drive the school forward by:
 - ensuring that middle leaders use information about the progress of groups of pupils to generate, implement and evaluate appropriate improvement initiatives
 - embedding new structures and systems so that governors hold leaders effectively to account.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Following the retirement of the longstanding headteacher in 2015, the school underwent a considerable period of turbulence in leadership. As a result of multiple changes and lack of leadership direction, the school experienced a period of decline. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics fell. However, since the arrival of the new headteacher in January this year, a renewed sense of purpose and optimism abounds, and morale is now high.
- Subject leaders are benefiting from training provided by the local authority. This is helping them to improve standards. However, not all subject leaders are aspirational enough for their subjects. Where this is the case, leaders lack the sense of urgency needed to improve outcomes for pupils. Subject leaders are benefiting from new systems to track progress, but do not use them effectively to help them understand what groups of pupils, most notably the most able, need to secure higher standards of attainment.
- The English leader has effectively improved most teachers' understanding of expectations for their pupils. There has been helpful staff training and teachers regularly discuss pupils' work. This has contributed to faster rates of progress, especially in reading. While there are improvements in writing, leaders acknowledge there is more work needed to raise attainment in some classes and year groups, in particular for the most able pupils.
- The curriculum has been generally developed well. Pupils enjoy opportunities to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding through topics such as 'Knock, Knock', which includes study of the local area. Pupils develop a wide range of skills in art, as seen in the high-quality work which adorns the corridors. Pupils also enjoy regular opportunities to develop their proficiency in sport, both in taught sessions and in a multitude of clubs. However, some aspects of the curriculum, notably modern foreign languages, are not as well developed as they should be to ensure that pupils going on to secondary school are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well through the caring ethos of the school. Almost all pupils who responded to the Ofsted pupil survey felt that the school encourages a high degree of respect and equality. Leaders are sensibly developing plans to further promote British values within the curriculum.
- The new headteacher has united the staff team. Working swiftly and purposefully with her two assistant heads, she has revised systems and quickly established the right priorities to move the school forward. Staff who spoke to inspectors and completed the Ofsted staff survey recognised these positive changes. Comments such as, 'Having her as a leader has totally changed the way I feel about working here' were typical of those received.
- Parents, too, recognise the way the school has changed and is changing. A parent who responded to the Ofsted survey, Parent View, summed up the views of many, saying, 'The new head is definitely improving the school, which is on a journey of change and moving quickly.'

- There is effective leadership for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities, and pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium. Provision is planned carefully and tracked meticulously to help ensure that these pupils receive appropriate support. As a result, they make sustained progress from their different starting points.

Governance of the school

- Governors have demonstrated a high degree of commitment to the school, steering it through a period of considerable leadership turbulence. They are aware of the impact of this period of change on staff, pupils and outcomes.
- Now that leadership is stable, governors have proactively recruited some members with the specific expertise needed to drive the school forward. However, many of the plans and systems needed to achieve this are at an early stage and thus not fully effective.
- Governors attend regular training and benefit from working within the locality group of governors. As a result of this helpful development, governors are starting to question leaders more closely about the school's work. However, governors do not systematically challenge leaders about the progress made by different groups of pupils.
- Governors visit the school regularly to see things for themselves and talk to staff and pupils. Plans are rightly in place to link these visits more tightly to improvement plans.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. All necessary checks are in place at recruitment. Governors check to ensure that all is as it should be. Staff training is regular and covers all required areas. This ensures that staff are confident in what to look out for to help keep pupils safe and know what to do if they have any concerns.
- There are strong welfare systems and good relationships between staff and pupils. These help create a culture in which pupil welfare and safeguarding is central to the work of the school.
- Most parents and all staff who completed the Ofsted questionnaires agree that children are safe at school. Parents told inspectors how pleased they were by recent safety additions such as the new school gates.
- Pupils who spoke to inspectors and completed the pupils' survey felt safe. They trust adults and report concerns confidently. They told inspectors that their old play equipment had been removed because it was unsafe. Pupils were pleased to have been involved in selecting new equipment, which will arrive soon.
- Recent systems introduced by leaders to monitor internet use help ensure pupil safety online. Regular opportunities to learn about e-safety help pupils to understand the importance of online safety outside school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- In some classes and year groups, work is not matched well enough to pupils' needs to support their rapid progress. Too often, work is too easy and pupils finish it quickly. Sometimes, it is too hard, and pupils are quickly confused. Often, pupils are unclear

what to do next and struggle to use their time effectively. As a result, some pupils are not attaining the standards expected for their age.

- Some teachers do not use questions effectively to extend thinking, connect learning or encourage reflection. As a result, the most able pupils do not experience the challenge they need to reach higher standards across the curriculum.
- Phonics is taught systematically and effectively. This allows younger pupils to confidently tackle new words in both their reading and writing. However, for older pupils, the teaching of spelling is having limited impact on their written work because they do not consistently apply the rules they have been taught.
- Most pupils enjoy their learning. This is especially the case when teachers link the learning to exciting stimulus experiences. For example, in an effective writing lesson, pupils enjoyed writing instructions detailing how to perform circus skills, such as juggling and plate spinning, following a visit from circus performers.
- Staff build positive relationships with pupils and create a warm, happy environment in classes. These relationships support all pupils to join in with activities. For example, in an effective science lesson, the teacher sensitively supported less confident pupils to contribute to a debate about science results. In this way, teaching promotes equality of opportunity well.
- Skilled teaching assistants have a well-informed understanding of pupils' needs. They review and adapt tasks appropriately when needed. This enables them to support pupils, including those who have SEN and/or disabilities, effectively in their learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. The school is a caring environment. Welfare, both of pupils and their families, is of paramount importance. The welfare team works effectively with pupils, their families and outside agencies to ensure that when a little extra help is needed from time to time, it is available.
- Parents appreciate the wide range of care and support available at the school. Over nine out of ten parents who responded to the Ofsted questionnaire, Parent View, agreed that their children were well cared for. One parent writing on Parent View typified the views of many, saying, 'When my child was struggling to deal with things, the school supported both her and us.'
- Pupils who spoke to inspectors and those observed around the school were confident and self-assured. They feel secure because they know that they will be listened to. Pupils are proud of their school. They value the attractively maintained garden area in the centre of the school. Pupils enjoy the wide range of clubs, activities and links with the community, for example the local railway. Pupils' workbooks show their increasing pride in their work, which is often carefully presented with well-formed handwriting.
- The recent revision of the school values, which are now 'Ready, respectful, safe', has simplified expectations considerably and supported pupils in understanding what is expected of them to be successful learners. They are responding to this with gusto.

Most pupils model these values around the school.

- Pupils told inspectors that bullying is rare. On the few occasions when it does occur, some parents feel things have taken too long to be resolved in the past. However, recent concerns have been addressed swiftly and effectively by leaders.
- In some classes and year groups, pupils are developing the motivation and self-discipline to become independent learners. However, these skills are not yet evident across the whole school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Where teaching is less strong, there are some incidents of low-level disruption and off-task behaviour which impacts adversely on pupils' capacity to learn.
- Pupils generally conduct themselves well around the school, which is an orderly environment. However, there are some occasional incidents of poor self-discipline in assemblies.
- Historically, school attendance has been good, although it has dropped slightly recently. An increasing number of pupils have been persistently absent. These absences are linked to specific and complex ongoing medical needs or individual needs which are being appropriately supported by the school and other agencies.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- In the 2017 end of key stage 1 national assessments, the proportion of pupils attaining the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics was below the proportion seen nationally. At the end of key stage 2, the proportion of pupils attaining the expected standard was in line with the national average in reading, but below the national average in writing and mathematics.
- In the 2017 end of key stage national assessments, the proportions of pupils reaching the higher standards were below national averages in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of both key stages.
- Current attainment in relation to age-related expectations is variable across the school and the curriculum. Too few pupils attain the higher standards. This is because too often work is not well matched to their needs and teaching does not consistently challenge pupils.
- Recently, progress has improved across the school. However, in some classes and year groups, this progress is from low starting points. This means pupils still have some way to go to attain as they should. Disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities are making similar progress to their peers.
- Work in pupils' books shows some good progress in writing. Pupils write for a range of purposes across the curriculum, using increasingly complex sentence construction, punctuation and vocabulary. However, spelling is often poor and basic grammatical conventions are often applied haphazardly.
- In mathematics, pupils demonstrate a sound knowledge of basic number and computational operations. However, there are not enough opportunities to apply this

knowledge through meaningful mathematical problems or to develop mathematical reasoning. As a result, even the most confident mathematicians are not attaining the highest standards.

- Pupils who read to inspectors did so fluently and with understanding. Pupils read often at home and school for both pleasure and information retrieval. Pupils enjoy a wide range of books and texts which contain sufficient challenge to help them develop their skills.
- In the 2017 national phonics screening check in Year 1, a greater proportion of pupils than seen nationally attained the expected standard. Current pupils are making good progress in acquiring phonics skills. This is because phonics is taught systematically and well.

Early years provision

Good

- Children get off to a good start in the early years. They make strong progress from their starting points so that the proportion of children reaching a good level of development is in line with or, as in 2017, above that seen nationally. In this way, children are well prepared for Year 1.
- Children are fully engaged with their learning because it stems from their interests. For example, they thoroughly enjoyed their focus on pirates, complete with an exciting pirate ship and treasure maps.
- Highly skilled staff support and extend children in their play and learning. During the inspection, staff were competently encouraging children to extend their vocabulary and to write in sentences.
- The capable early years leader has an accurate picture of the needs of children, parents and staff. The early morning weekly phonics sessions for parents and children provide effective opportunities to learn about letter sounds together and extend learning. A parent told inspectors, 'His phonics and reading are good, but this helps put it into action in his writing.'
- The early years leader has inducted her relatively new team comprehensively, ensuring that there is a sense of unity and clear purpose in the early years. Adults work well together, carefully sharing information that allows them to support children and meet their needs well.
- Parents value the secure and effective start to school life provided in the early years. A parent, whose response typified the views shared with inspectors, commented on Parent View, 'The staff go above and beyond to help the children learn, settle in, make friends and give them a fantastic start in life.'
- The early years leader recognises that, historically, a smaller proportion of children exceeded a good level of development than seen nationally. The right steps have been taken to improve this.

School details

Unique reference number	125959
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	10040718

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	412
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rosemary Cornish
Headteacher	Amie Bowers
Telephone number	01903 771555
Website	www.georgiangardens.w-sussex.sch.uk/
Email address	office@georgiangardens.w-sussex.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	12–13 March 2014

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, the school has experienced a period of leadership turbulence. The headteacher who was in post at the time of the previous inspection retired in 2015. Another headteacher was appointed, but subsequently left the school. There was then a period of temporary leadership, with other school staff acting to fill the position and local authority interim arrangements. The current headteacher took up post in January 2018.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding is broadly in line with the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have support for special educational needs and/or

disabilities is lower than average, although the proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is in line with the national average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors met with staff, governors, parents and leaders. The lead inspector met with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including development plans, minutes of meetings and progress information.
- Inspectors observed pupils around the school and in their classes. They met with groups of pupils to get their views on the school and to hear them read.
- They met with parents on the playground, and considered the 80 responses to the Ofsted questionnaire, Parent View, along with 80 free-text responses. Inspectors also considered the 41 responses to the pupil survey and the 35 responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

Deborah Gordon, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
James Munt	Ofsted Inspector
Doug Brawley	Ofsted Inspector

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