

# Valentine Primary School

Valentine Avenue, Sholing, Southampton, Hampshire SO19 0EQ

## Inspection dates

26–27 March 2019

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- Since the previous inspection, leaders have been unable to improve the quality of teaching or pupils' outcomes sufficiently. While inadequate teaching has been eradicated, the school still requires improvement to be good.
- There have been some improvements. Teaching has strengthened, and most teachers have high expectations of pupils. Nevertheless, inconsistencies in the quality of teaching remain. Some teaching does not support pupils in key stage 2 to attain at an age-appropriate standard.
- Weak teaching over time has left a significant minority of pupils with gaps in their understanding, particularly in writing. This means that teaching is required to support these pupils to catch up and make the progress they are capable of.
- Over the past three years, the proportion of pupils who left key stage 2 at the expected standard has been below the national average. Low proportions of pupils attained at the higher standard. This represents weak progress from their starting points.
- Disadvantaged pupils are making stronger progress than previously. Nevertheless, the progress made by disadvantaged boys is weaker than that of other pupils in school and nationally.
- Governors, until recently, did not possess an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. As a result, governors have not held leaders to account effectively for the weak progress of pupils.

### The school has the following strengths

- The care, consideration and support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are strengths of the school. Skilled leadership and teaching ensure that these pupils are welcomed, included and able to succeed in every aspect of school life.
- Leaders' ambition to improve is clear. The senior and middle leaders are helping to drive improvements in the school.
- Recent changes to the curriculum, particularly in mathematics, have strengthened pupils' progress.
- Pupils and staff enjoy positive relationships both in and out of the classroom.
- The early years provides children with a good start to their formal education. Children learn all the right skills to thrive in Year 1.

## Full report

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

- Improve teaching and learning by ensuring that:
  - staff consistently identify and address gaps in pupils' understanding of writing
  - tasks are appropriately ambitious and closely matched to pupils' needs.
- Improve pupils' outcomes in key stage 2 by ensuring that more pupils than in the past, including those who are disadvantaged, make the progress of which they are capable.
- Improve leadership and management by:
  - refining processes for identifying pupils who fall behind, particularly those who are disadvantaged, and ensuring they catch up with their peers
  - further strengthening systems used by governors to hold leaders to account for the progress of pupils.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- Since the previous inspection, leaders have worked hard to stem the decline in standards. Weak teaching over time has led to lower-than-average proportions of pupils leaving the school with the skills and understanding expected for their age. Despite leaders' ambition and the positive impact of recent changes, some older pupils will need significant support to catch up with their peers nationally.
- Leaders know the pupils well and identify accurately the challenges faced by disadvantaged pupils in the school. The use of additional funding has improved, and leaders are now measuring the progress these pupils make more accurately. Nevertheless, significant differences remain between the progress and attainment of disadvantaged pupils, particularly boys, and those of other pupils in school.
- Leaders possess a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching. In some year groups, there is now a greater consistency in the quality of teaching and this is a direct result of the actions of senior and middle leaders. Within the school, there is a developing capacity to improve. Leaders understand that actions need further time to embed to ensure that pupils achieve good outcomes.
- Middle leaders are ambitious for their school and have a clear idea of what needs to be achieved. For example, changes to the mathematics curriculum have secured a more consistent quality of teaching than in the past and improved pupils' progress. Improvement is increasingly shared between leaders – an important aspect of leadership in this large school.
- Provision for pupils with SEND is tailored effectively to meet individual pupils' needs. Physical and curricular adaptations ensure that the school is fully accessible for all pupils. Pupils typically make strong progress with their learning, social and emotional needs, confidence, independence, self-esteem and resilience.
- The local authority has offered useful and sharply focused support to leaders, helping them to evaluate the school accurately and secure improvements. For example, officers worked with leaders, helping them to monitor and improve the quality of teaching. Officers have been instrumental in supporting leaders to eradicate inadequate teaching.
- The curriculum is well planned and offers pupils a variety of opportunities to extend their knowledge in the humanities, science and the arts. Music is a strength, and pupils are hugely enthusiastic about their recent Rock Challenge success. Pupils were particularly excited about their 'costume' and 'concept' awards. The carefully mapped curriculum provides pupils with a range of interesting 'hooks' which ensure that excitement and enthusiasm are abundant, contributing greatly to pupils' positive attitudes towards the school.
- Additional funding to improve teaching and participation in sports is used well. Leaders think creatively about different ways to engage pupils to develop a love of sport. They have developed a strong network of local contacts, such as Southampton Football Club, to help pupils pursue their interests outside of the school. Breakfast sports clubs have had a positive impact on developing pupils' engagement in sport.

## Governance of the school

- Governors have worked hard to maintain and improve the school's resources and keep a watchful eye on the safeguarding and safety of pupils and staff. For example, they have worked closely with the local authority and building contractors to ensure that appropriate cordons are in place during the significant building works currently being undertaken. As a result, the site is a safe and secure environment for all who use it.
- Recently, governors have refined systems for monitoring the progress of pupils and have a clearer understanding of internal and externally published assessment information. Nevertheless, low, and at times declining, standards have not been challenged effectively in recent years.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Statutory checks on all staff are undertaken before they commence employment. Training for staff is relevant, up to date and reflects concerns prevalent in the local community. Consequently, staff and leaders have a deep understanding of safeguarding issues and are well equipped to react quickly and effectively when the need arises.
- Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe. During the inspection, pupils in Reception enjoyed a visit from the fire service and learned how to prevent fires and methods to escape buildings and raise the alarm if they needed to. Pupils throughout the school are well equipped to identify, assess and minimise risks to themselves and others.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

## Requires improvement

- In most lessons, staff plan learning which helps pupils to build on their prior understanding. However, in a significant minority of lessons, teachers do not expect enough of pupils. In these classes, some pupils' work is too easy, left unfinished or is of a poor standard.
- Pupils write extensively and often. Teachers typically offer pupils useful guidance in writing. However, gaps in their learning are not addressed efficiently enough. As a result, pupils, particularly those in key stage 2, do not consistently use age-appropriate punctuation, spelling or sentence structures in their writing.
- Teachers work collaboratively to plan and carefully sequence learning. For example, pupils wrote persuasive texts to encourage women to sign up for voluntary service, which was closely linked to their Second World War topic. Nevertheless, some staff do not provide consistent instructions or set pupils tasks which are suitably challenging. Low proportions of pupils in key stage 2 are attaining, or are on track to attain, at the higher standard.
- Staff and pupils enjoy positive relationships. Classrooms are typically calm and productive spaces, where pupils can discuss, consider and evaluate their learning.
- Teachers provide pupils with useful instruction in mathematics and allow them to practise and hone their skills. As a result, pupils can tackle challenging problems with

confidence, as they can quickly draw on a range of methods to help them.

- Pupils are taught to read well because they can rehearse their skills regularly and read aloud to staff in the school. Pupils who fall behind are supported well through the useful range of interventions. As a result, pupils' progress in reading is improving.
- Teachers' strong subject knowledge in physical education (PE) lessons ensures that pupils are taught the skills they need to perform complex tasks. For example, in Year 4 pupils were able to perform the correct moves and turns to choreograph a gymnastics routine. Teaching in PE is a strength of the school.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils can empathise with others. This was typified during a Year 6 lesson, where pupils reviewed and discussed sensitively the persecution of Jews during the Second World War. Teachers skilfully guided pupils to navigate this difficult topic and helped pupils to develop their own morals and views through the experiences of others.
- Pupils who are new to the school, including those with previously poor behaviour, receive effective support to learn the ropes and follow the positive behaviour of others. This helps pupils to integrate into school life with minimal disruption to their own or others' learning.
- Family learning is at the heart of the school's work with the wider community. A regular and considered timetable of classes is available to parents and carers to help them to develop their parenting skills, better understand the school's curriculum and improve their understanding of homework. As one parent noted: 'Valentine isn't just a school; it's a community.'
- Pupils with SEND are well supported and respected by their peers. When these pupils display challenging behaviour, staff show great care and respect for pupils and skilfully support them to control their feelings and emotions. Displays help parents to understand the range of needs that pupils in the school have. This helps parents to appreciate the inclusive nature of the school and to improve their own understanding of pupils' different needs.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils typically work hard in class and follow their teachers' instructions. For example, in Year 5, the teacher explained how to analyse a poem, checked that pupils understood and ensured that they were able to complete the first task before working with a small support group. When instructions and expectations are clear, pupils do their best and enjoy their learning.
- Behaviour in the playground is well managed and supervised. Pupils play nicely together and enjoy the opportunity to chat and run around. A small proportion of

pupils need extra support during this time and their needs are met well through a range of small clubs and activities.

- The attendance of pupils is carefully monitored by leaders. Staff form strong relationships with families to ensure that positive habits of regular attendance are established from the off. As a result, the rates of attendance are rising and are now nearing the national average.
- In the lunch hall, pupils sit sensibly, chatting about their day and eating their food. Pupils queue patiently and make polite conversation with adults in the room. Pupils clear away their plates after they have eaten, sensibly scrape their left-over food into the bins provided and place their cutlery in buckets ready for washing up.

### Outcomes for pupils

### Requires improvement

- Last year, the proportion of pupils in key stage 2 who attained the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics was below the national average. Leaders' actions have raised the standard of teaching in key stage 2. Nevertheless, inconsistencies in the quality of teaching mean that pupils' progress needs to strengthen further to ensure that pupils attain at an age-related standard.
- In the past three years, the proportion of pupils in key stage 1 who attained at the higher standard was broadly in line with the national average. However, teachers do not routinely challenge pupils to read and write at greater depth as they enter key stage 2. As a result, lower-than-national-average proportions attain at the higher standard.
- Disadvantaged pupils make variable progress. In some cases, the needs of these pupils are carefully identified and met. For example, parents have received useful reading training and are now better able to support their child at home. Nevertheless, disadvantaged pupils, particularly boys, make less progress than their peers in the school and other pupils nationally.
- Pupils write regularly and at length. They produce interesting texts and the improvements in their presentation and handwriting are clear. However, a significant minority of pupils in key stage 2 have gaps in their understanding which prevent them from working at an age-appropriate level.
- Pupils throughout the school are making strong progress in mathematics. This is because they have a good grasp of the basics of calculation and number and practise these often. As a result, they can solve increasingly complex problems, using their mathematical understanding to support their working out.
- Pupils make a strong start to their early reading. For example, in Year 1, staff modelled the pronunciation of 'butterfly' to ensure that pupils spoke and wrote this correctly. The proportion of pupils who achieve the standard in the Year 1 phonics check is in line with the national average.
- Pupils make good progress across the foundation curriculum. For example, in Year 3, pupils looked at the history of Southampton, considering the development of the city over the past 500 years to the present day. Pupils across the school develop useful subject-specific knowledge which helps them to make sense of the world around them.
- Pupils with SEND make strong progress from their starting points because they are well

supported by staff. For example, in Year 3, staff supported a pupil to identify two- and three-dimensional shapes by manipulating sand. Meaningful adaptations and support ensure that pupils with SEND are thriving.

## Early years provision

**Good**

- Children in the early years enter the school with levels of development below those seen nationally. By the end of Reception, high proportions achieve a good level of development. This represents strong progress from children's starting points.
- Leaders have an accurate overview of the provision. They work closely with other local schools and have recently acted on advice from experts to implement new strategies to improve the setting. Consequently, classrooms are now more stimulating, because activities are closely matched to children's interests.
- Transition into the early years is thoroughly planned and ensures that children's and parents' anxiety is reduced. Parents appreciate the strong communication they receive. This helps to welcome new parents to the school community and provides a useful foundation for positive relationships in the future.
- Teaching in the early years is strong. Careful planning ensures that staff focus on what children need to make strong progress. Close monitoring of children's progress ensures that gaps in learning are picked up quickly and addressed effectively. Children are well prepared for the challenges of Year 1.
- Expectations of children are high. Systems are clear and understood by all. Consequently, children follow the rules, behave well and classes are calm and purposeful.

## School details

Unique reference number	132025
Local authority	Southampton
Inspection number	10058136

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	719
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jason Teoh
Headteacher	Liz Filer
Telephone number	023 8044 8944
Website	<a href="http://www.valentineprimary.co.uk/">www.valentineprimary.co.uk/</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:info@valentineprimary.co.uk">info@valentineprimary.co.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	9–10 November 2016

## Information about this school

- This is a larger-than-average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported by the pupil premium is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is above the national average.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 28 parts of lessons, some with senior leaders.
- In addition to discussions with parents, 71 responses to the online questionnaire Parent View were considered.
- A range of the school's documentation was scrutinised to gather information on: leaders' evaluation of the school's performance; systems for managing the performance of teachers; behaviour and safety of pupils; safeguarding; the progress and attainment of pupils; and curriculum leadership.
- Inspectors scrutinised the school's website to evaluate the quality of information for parents and whether the school meets statutory publishing requirements.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils to gather their views and heard pupils read.
- Inspectors met with school leaders, representatives from the governing body, including the chair, and officers from the local authority.

## Inspection team

Daniel Lambert, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Judith O'Hare	Ofsted Inspector
Maxine McDonald-Taylor	Her Majesty's Inspector
Kevin Parfoot	Ofsted Inspector

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