

# Blackwell Primary School

Blackwell Farm Road, East Grinstead, West Sussex, RH19 3JL

## Inspection dates

1 May–6 June 2019

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

- Since the last inspection, there has been much instability in leadership, governance and staffing. This has limited the school's effectiveness, and standards have declined further.
- Procedures for safeguarding pupils are not effective. Staff do not have a secure enough understanding of their responsibility to keep pupils safe.
- The quality of teaching and learning is inadequate. Over time, teaching does not meet the needs of different groups of pupils well enough, including the most able and those who need help to catch up.
- In the early years, leaders and staff do not have the right skills to evaluate the provision or to ensure that teaching is effective. Children lack opportunities to develop their interests and extend their learning. Children's well-being and safety are not of the highest priority.
- Additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is not used effectively because pupils' needs are not understood well enough.
- The curriculum is weak. Pupils do not study a range of subjects with any regularity. Standards are too low in many subjects.
- Assessment of pupils' work is inaccurate. Consequently, leaders do not know how well pupils are progressing.
- Incidents of poor behaviour are high and rising. Playground behaviour is boisterous and at times unsafe. The school's behaviour policy is not well understood or implemented by staff.
- Too few pupils across all key stages, including those from vulnerable groups, and the most able, make the progress of which they are capable. Some vulnerable groups are further disadvantaged by persistent absence

### The school has the following strengths

- The external support provided by the local authority is beginning to bring much-needed capacity to the leadership of the school.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is developed well through a range of enrichment activities.
- Parents, carers and staff recognise that the acting headteacher has brought some stability to the leadership of the school. They appreciate the positive changes she has made in the short time she has been in post.

## 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?

- Ensure that arrangements for safeguarding are effective, by:
  - undertaking regular training for staff so that they have a deeper understanding of their statutory duties to ensure that pupils are kept safe, including on the playground
  - urgently ensuring that staff have a good knowledge of children's welfare arrangements in the early years and that the environment is made safe
  - reviewing the role and responsibilities of the designated safeguarding lead
  - ensuring that the single central record is kept up to date.
- Strengthen the quality of leadership and governance, including in the early years, by ensuring that:
  - a sustainable and effective leadership and staff structure is in place
  - governors have a clear understanding of the school's priorities and provide robust support and challenge to leaders to enable rapid improvement
  - effective monitoring of teaching takes place to improve teaching and raise standards
  - the skills of subject leaders, teachers and support staff are developed so that they can contribute fully to raising standards in all subjects
  - the curriculum engages pupils in a well-thought-through range of learning across all subjects
  - additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is used effectively so that it makes a positive impact on outcomes for this group of pupils.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment so that all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, and the most able, make strong progress, by ensuring that:
  - teachers have consistently high expectations of what pupils can achieve in a wide range of subjects
  - assessment of pupils' learning is reliably accurate
  - assessment information is used to address gaps in pupils' learning, so that tasks are well matched to pupils' abilities
  - pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are provided with consistently effective support to enable them to make good progress from their

starting points

- children in early years are provided with learning opportunities that interest them and extend their learning
  - staff, including those in early years, are suitably trained to develop their skills and subject knowledge.
- Improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare by ensuring that:
- an effective behaviour policy is implemented that is understood by staff and pupils
  - there is a reduction in the number of incidents of bullying and poor behaviour
  - leaders rigorously track and monitor pupils' attendance to reduce the proportion of disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND who are absent or persistently absent from school
  - fluctuations to staffing reduce so that pupils' social and emotional needs are well understood.

An external review of the use of pupil premium funding should be undertaken to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Inadequate

- Since the previous inspection in 2016, the school has undergone a further period of instability. Leaders and staff have been absent for long periods of time or have left the school. Many new staff have joined. The governing body has undergone a restructure, with a new chair of the governing body having only very recently taken up the role. Due to weakened leadership and no clear vision or strategy in place for improvement, standards have declined over time and the culture of safeguarding is ineffective.
- The acting headteacher has, in the short time since taking up her post, swiftly identified the many areas for improvement needed. She is acutely aware that teachers' expectations for pupils' achievement need to rise. Parents, staff and pupils appreciate the stability she has brought to the leadership of the school. However, as she rightly acknowledges, there remains much work to do and standards are too low.
- The local authority, although recognising that the school needs intensive support, has not fully grasped the many areas that urgently need to be addressed. Officers have put in place external support to improve weaknesses in teaching and bolster leadership. The impact of this support is not yet firmly embedded, and leadership at all levels remains fragile.
- A significant number of parents who responded to the online survey, Parent View, prior to the inspection were negative about the school. Parents were concerned with a range of worries, but in particular, leadership and leaders' responsiveness to concerns. Responses to Parent View and conversations with parents during the inspection suggest that the acting headteacher has dealt with many of these concerns effectively. However, parents remain wary. They are rightly worried about the temporary arrangements that surround leadership and teaching arrangements and the impact this may be having on their children's well-being and academic progress.
- The acting headteacher rightly spotted inaccuracies in the school's assessment information of pupils' achievement. Assessment systems are being reviewed closely and weaknesses are beginning to be rectified. Nonetheless, assessment currently remains inaccurate and therefore leaders are unable to confidently measure pupils' progress or provide pupils with the support that they need.
- Subject leaders for English and mathematics are beginning to lead their respective areas more effectively, although the impact of their work remains limited. The consultant headteacher has worked closely with them to introduce new approaches to the teaching of mathematics and English, improve assessment procedures in these subjects and provide more detailed support for teachers' planning.
- Leaders carefully allocate funding to support disadvantaged pupils and track their progress regularly. However, leaders do not have a clear overview of the difference this funding is making to pupils' outcomes. In some cases, well-intentioned interventions have ceased due to staff shortages. As a result, these pupils are not making the progress they need to catch up with their peers.
- Leaders ensure that the physical needs of pupils with SEND are met. They ensure that these pupils have the resources and equipment that they need. However, staff do not

have the necessary skills to provide effective support for pupils' particular learning needs. Leaders have sensibly undertaken an audit at the beginning of the academic year and have identified the required training needed for staff. This training has yet to take place. Consequently, teachers and support staff are not skilled enough to meet the learning needs of this group of pupils.

- Leaders' oversight of the wider curriculum is inadequate. They have failed to ensure that the curriculum is suitably broad and well organised. Teaching of subjects other than English and mathematics is sporadic and poorly planned, and work in pupils' books is of a low standard. Teachers do not take account of how well pupils are progressing in subjects such as science, history, geography and art. As a result, pupils make poor progress across a wide range of subjects.
- Additional sports funding is used well. Pupils enjoy their participation in competitive sports and tournaments with other schools as well as the many sports clubs offered at school.
- Leaders have ensured that pupils' spiritual, moral, cultural and social development is promoted well. Extra-curricular activities to enrich the wider curriculum are provided, such as an 'Anglo-Saxon welly walk' and a trip to the Science Museum in London. Pupils' cultural and social development is developed through activities such as 'her story' where each class studies a woman from history. The school welcomes visitors from different religions and cultures to talk to pupils. Pupils are involved in collecting food for the annual harvest festival and the local foodbank. British values, such as democracy, are promoted through the school's values and pupils' individual responsibilities.
- The school may not appoint newly qualified teachers.

## **Governance of the school**

- As with the leadership of the school, the governing body has undergone considerable turbulence. Governors acknowledge that the pace of improvement has not been adequate and express concerns about leadership capacity, pupils' behaviour and the quality of teaching. However, under their direction, problems have continued, and behaviour and safety have worsened.
- Recent changes to the governing body have brought a renewed determination to bring about sustainable and secure improvements. Governors recognise that staffing and leadership instability resulted in a failure to improve outcomes for pupils in the past.
- The new chair of the governing body is well supported by external help from the local authority and, together with new governors, is committed to making the necessary improvements. While the newly formed governing body has not yet had time to show the impact of its work, it now has a growing capacity to carry out its statutory duties.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.
- Staff do not have a good enough understanding of their responsibilities to ensure that pupils are kept safe. As a result, the culture of safeguarding is not suitably vigilant

across all areas of the school.

- Induction for new staff is particularly weak. Staff receive insufficient training in safeguarding and this is not updated regularly. Due to the high number of staff changes, it is a particular weakness that procedures are insufficiently secure to ensure that all adults working in the school are alert to any safeguarding concerns.
- Some areas of the early years environment are hazardous for the youngest children. Adults do not routinely show the highest regard for children's health and safety. For instance, chemicals and medication are not kept safely, and children are exposed to unnecessary risk.
- Many pupils say they do not always feel safe in school, particularly when outside on the playground. Some pupils say they feel intimidated by others during playtime.
- The school's single central register of checks on adults at the school is not rigorously maintained. For instance, new governors and the external headteacher have not yet been added to this register.
- Leaders have wisely commissioned an external safeguarding audit. They are beginning to action the recommendations to ensure that improvements are made to safeguarding systems and procedures.

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

### **Inadequate**

- High staff turnover and temporary arrangements have hindered pupils' ability to learn well for some time. Many pupils across the school are unsettled, have not formed strong bonds with their teachers and do not know what is expected of them.
- Pupils' learning needs are not understood. Activities are not matched closely to pupils' starting points. Furthermore, teachers do not use assessment information well enough to plan next steps in pupils' learning.
- Teachers do not fully understand how to assess pupils' work. Often, assessment is overgenerous and inaccurate. As a result, leaders and teachers are not clear how well pupils are progressing.
- Most-able pupils do not regularly receive appropriate levels of challenge. This group of pupils often complete tasks that they can already do. Teachers do not routinely plan activities that stretch and deepen their thinking. As a result, these pupils are not making the progress of which they are capable.
- The learning experiences for pupils with SEND and those who are disadvantaged, including the most-able disadvantaged, are inconsistent and are not monitored well enough by leaders. The checking of their progress is further hindered by inaccurate assessment. Poorly planned teaching does not routinely take into account pupils' starting points. Teachers and support staff do not have the skills to provide the focused support that these pupils need. Consequently, these groups of pupils are not effectively supported to make progress.
- The teaching of early reading is weak. Phonics knowledge is not taught effectively. Teachers and adults do not have precise enough skills to ensure that pupils learn to apply sounds securely when reading words. Pupils have regular access to books, but not enough opportunities are planned for pupils to share texts and read widely for

different purposes across different subjects.

- Leaders' recent work to improve the teaching of mathematics is showing some early signs of improvement. A new approach to the teaching of mathematics has provided a structure for teachers to use as well as giving pupils greater access to fluency, reasoning and problem-solving activities. As a result, a good number of pupils now describe their favourite subject as 'maths'. However, teachers are not reliably aware of pupils' gaps in their learning and do not ensure that these gaps are suitably acted on.
- Work in pupils' books shows that standards of work across the wider curriculum are too low. Pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding are not incrementally built up securely. Teachers do not encourage pupils to transfer the skills they have learned in English and mathematics to other areas of their learning. As a result, pupils achieve poorly in a wide range of different subjects.

## **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 the school's culture of safeguarding is ineffective and welfare requirements in the early years are not met.
- While most pupils are confident that teachers address incidents of bullying quickly, some parents and pupils feel that bullying is not dealt with effectively. In addition, recorded incidents of bullying and poor behaviour are high and rising.
- The high turnover of staff and lack of leadership have resulted in staff not knowing pupils well enough. Pupils' interests and social and emotional needs are not fully understood. Despite some effective work with particularly vulnerable pupils, pupils' development overall is inhibited by the many changes to staffing, poor teaching and a weak curriculum. Consequently, pupils are not thriving.
- The school's curriculum enables pupils to develop a useful understanding of how to keep themselves safe online. They have received advice on dealing with cyber bullying when using a range of digital technologies.

### **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is inadequate.
- A significant number of pupils feel that behaviour is only good some of the time. They say that although sometimes teachers address poor behaviour, nonetheless it continues repeatedly. Some parents express concerns about behaviour and the actions the school is taking to improve this.
- Playground behaviour of some of the older pupils is overly boisterous, and at times aggressive. There is a palpable tension at playtime with groups of predominately boys dominating the playground. Staff are not well equipped to manage behaviour and too frequently turn a blind eye. Consequently, this makes the playground an unsafe place to be.

- Incidents of poor behaviour are recorded systematically but analysis of any patterns around such records and subsequent follow-up are unclear. Leaders, including governors, do not have a clear strategy in place to ensure that these incidents reduce. Leaders recognise the need for urgent action to improve this area of the school's work.
- Behaviour during lessons is less disruptive. Pupils, on the whole, cheerfully participate in their learning. Where they are engaged or challenged suitably they contribute to lessons effectively. However, pupils do not demonstrate a high level of investment or interest in their learning.
- Pupils' attendance overall is broadly in line with national averages. Leaders provide strong support for individual families to ensure that pupils attend school. However, the monitoring and analysis of patterns and trends to do with attendance are underdeveloped and the persistent absence of pupils with SEND, and disadvantaged pupils, remains too high.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Inadequate

- Since the last inspection, standards have declined. As a result, too many pupils leave the school poorly equipped to access the next stage of their education.
- In 2018 at the end of key stage 2, the proportion of pupils who achieved age-related expectations in writing and mathematics was below that seen nationally. In addition, too few pupils achieve age-related expectations by the end of key stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The most able pupils, including the most-able disadvantaged, do not achieve well because work is not routinely challenging enough. The proportion of pupils who exceed the standards expected for their age is too low. In 2018 at the end of key stage 2, no pupils achieved the combined measure in reading, writing and mathematics at the higher standard. Similarly, at the end of key stage 1, too few pupils achieved greater depth in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Disadvantaged pupils consistently make less progress than other pupils nationally, particularly in mathematics. Although progress is slightly stronger in reading and writing, nonetheless it remains below national averages and disadvantaged pupils' progress lags behind that of their peers.
- The school's poor provision for pupils with SEND means that these pupils do not receive the support they require to help them make good progress from their starting points.
- Although the proportion of pupils who met the expected standard in the phonics screening check in 2018 was broadly average, phonics teaching requires improvement. Staff do not have the skills needed to improve outcomes. Too few pupils are making the progress they are capable of in developing a secure understanding of early reading skills.
- Since January 2019, with the support of external expertise, pupils' progress has slowly begun to improve in English and mathematics. However, work in pupils' books shows that this remains insecure, and progress is not strong enough to enable pupils to catch up.

- Work in pupils' books also shows that progress continues to be weak across a wide range of subjects due to poorly planned teaching and low expectations.

## Early years provision

## Inadequate

- Leadership of the early years provision is inadequate. During the course of this year, leaders have not tracked children's progress closely enough and there has been no robust evaluation of the provision's effectiveness. Despite some additional support, standards continue to remain low. Children are not well prepared for Year 1.
- The quality of teaching is poor. Children have experienced fluctuating and changeable teaching arrangements over the course of their first year. This means that their needs are not catered for well and are not understood.
- Leaders have not ensured that statutory welfare requirements are adhered to in the early years provision. The environment is poorly organised and in some areas dangerous. Staff attentiveness to keeping children safe lacks vigilance. As a result, children are not kept safe.
- Children's learning is not extended or developed consistently well. Adults do not use what they know about children's learning to plan suitably engaging activities, both inside and outside the classroom. Activities do not engage children well enough, and consequently children flit about and lose interest quickly.
- While some tentative steps have been made to improve the quality of provision, adults do not make a consistently strong contribution to children's learning. Leaders recognise that staff working in early years need further training and support to develop their skills. This work is already planned.
- Children's phonics skills are beginning to deepen but lack of adult oversight does not support pupils to sound out letters and blend these securely.
- Assessment practice is weak and unreliable. Children's learning journeys are overly focused on writing, and show limited evidence of other aspects of learning. Adults rarely assess other areas of learning. Consequently, leaders and adults do not have an accurate understanding of how well children are progressing.
- Although in the past a broadly average proportion of children left early years with a good level of development, not enough children make the progress of which they are capable, given their starting points.

## School details

Unique reference number	125963
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	10088142

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	381
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lindsey Reeves
Acting Headteacher	Caroline Jefferis
Telephone number	01342 323906
Website	<a href="http://www.blackwell.w-sussex.sch.uk/">http://www.blackwell.w-sussex.sch.uk/</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:head@blackwellpri.co.uk">head@blackwellpri.co.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	8–9 December 2016

## Information about this school

- The acting headteacher has been in post since January 2019.
- The current chair of the governing body took on the role in April 2019. New governors have recently joined the governing body.
- The headteacher, who is also the lead for the early years, is currently absent from the school.
- Over the last 12 months, eight teachers have joined the school, three of whom are newly qualified teachers.
- The local authority is providing financial and leadership support to the school. Two local headteachers are working part time in the school to support the acting headteacher and raise standards. A national leader of governance is supporting the newly formed governing body.
- The school is larger than average and has increased its pupil numbers since the last

inspection.

- The majority of pupils are White British, with small proportions from other minority ethnic groups.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have additional support to meet their special educational need and/or disabilities is slightly above the national average but the proportion who have an education, health and care plan is below that found in most schools.

## Information about this inspection

- The first part of this inspection was conducted in May 2019. Through no fault of the school, two of Her Majesty's Inspectors returned to gather further evidence in June 2019.
- Inspectors observed teaching and learning across all classes in the school. Almost all of these visits were conducted jointly with senior leaders.
- Two meetings were held with representatives from the local authority.
- Inspectors met with a range of staff, including the acting headteacher, two consultant headteachers, subject leaders for English and mathematics, and the inclusion manager. The inspectors met with four members of the governing body, including the chair of the governing body.
- Inspectors considered the 153 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, 52 free-text responses from parents, and a letter and an email sent to the inspectors. Inspectors spoke to some parents at the start and the end of the school day.
- Inspectors took into account 23 responses to the staff questionnaire and held a meeting with a range of staff during the inspection to gather their views. Inspectors considered 21 responses to the Ofsted online pupil survey, spoke to a group of pupils from Year 1 to Year 6 and spoke informally to pupils in lessons and on the playground.
- Inspectors, with senior leaders, examined a sample of pupils' work in their books across all subjects taught in the curriculum.
- Inspection teams considered a wide range of documentation, including information available on the school's website and records relating to pupils' attainment, progress, attendance and behaviour. Information on governance, including minutes of governors' meetings, was scrutinised. The school's self-evaluation and improvement plans were scrutinised along with records of the school's work to keep pupils safe.

## Inspection team

Frances Nation, lead inspector June 2019	Her Majesty's Inspector
Elizabeth Farr, June 2019	Her Majesty's Inspector
David Cousins, lead inspector May 2019	Ofsted Inspector
Linda Appleby, May 2019	Ofsted Inspector
Simon Yates, May 2019	Ofsted Inspector

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