

Painters Ash Primary School

Masefield Road, Gravesend, Kent, DA11 8EL

Inspection dates

7–8 February 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Achievement requires improvement because pupils do not make enough progress in the school.
- Teaching is not good enough to make up for inadequate progress in the past to ensure that all pupils reach the levels of which they are capable.
- When teachers are demonstrating how to complete independent tasks, their explanations are not always sufficiently clear to ensure all pupils are successful.
- Teachers do not always monitor progress sufficiently well during lessons to realise when pupils need more detailed explanations to be able to complete tasks successfully. This limits the progress some pupils make.
- Marking does not always give pupils comments to improve their work and pupils are not always given sufficient time to respond to comments. This limits the effectiveness of teachers' guidance and therefore of pupils' understanding of how to improve their work.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage do not have sufficient opportunities to experience a range of learning experiences.
- Staff in the Early Years Foundation Stage do not use the information gleaned from their observations effectively to inform planning and assessment.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher, working with a highly effective senior team and members of the governing body, is inspiring everyone to aim higher. Teaching and pupils' achievement have started to improve.
- Pupils reach average standards in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school, and their attendance is improving.
- All staff use the new behaviour system consistently. Consequently, behaviour has improved since the previous inspection and is now good.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 25 lessons or parts of lessons, including the teaching of phonics (letter patterns and the sounds they represent). Most of the teaching staff were observed, including those who teach specialist groups.
- Inspectors attended an assembly, listened to pupils read and held meetings with pupils, staff and representatives from the local authority and the governing body.
- Inspectors took account of the 23 responses to the online Parent View survey, as well as to other correspondence from parents and carers during the inspection.
- Inspectors looked closely at pupils' work in lessons, as well as the work they have completed over time in their books.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents, including those relating to safeguarding and child protection, the governing body minutes, the school's self-evaluation and development planning, data relating to pupils' academic performance, monitoring of teaching records, logs relating to behaviour and attendance figures.

Inspection team

Jeanie Jovanova, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Peter Thrussell	Additional inspector
Gillian Bosschaert	Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs who are supported through school action is slightly higher than average. The proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is in-line with the national average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for looked after children, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children of service families, is in line with the national average.
- The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage. A range of minority ethnic groups is represented in smaller numbers.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is lower than that found nationally, and very few are at an early stage of learning English.
- The school does not use alternative provision for its pupils.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- There has been considerable staff turbulence since the previous inspection, including the appointment of a new headteacher.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' achievement through improving teaching so that it is consistently good and more is outstanding by ensuring that:
 - teachers demonstrate what is required to complete independent tasks sufficiently clearly so that all pupils are able to achieve success
 - teachers monitor pupils' understanding carefully during lessons, and stop to provide clearer instructions where pupils' progress is stalling
 - the marking of pupils' books always includes useful comments to help pupils improve their work and that pupils are always given sufficient time to respond to these comments in lessons.
- Improve the effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - ensuring staff understand how to interpret evidence gathered during observations to fully inform their assessment of children's abilities and use this in their planning
 - promoting a range of learning activities, across all areas, both indoors and outdoors, in order to maximise the progress children make.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because pupils do not make enough progress across the school.
- The level of skills children enter Reception with varies, but is often below those of typical four-year-olds, particularly in literacy and mathematics.
- Although standards at the end of Key Stage 1 have risen since the previous inspection, they are still significantly below national figures. Progress is starting to improve, particularly in Year 2, where pupils are starting to catch up with pupils in other schools.
- Pupils leave the school at the end of Key Stage 2 with standards in English and mathematics that are broadly average. The acceptable levels of attainment are largely due to an enormous amount of catch up at the hands of highly competent Year 6 teachers where pupils make much faster progress. Pupils do not make as much progress in Years 3 to 5.
- A range of extra support has been put into place to help pupils who have not made enough progress to catch up.
- Pupils' results in the phonics (the sounds letters make) screening check in Year 1 last year were below the nationally expected level. Consequently, one of the first areas the new headteacher addressed was the teaching of phonics. School records now indicate that most pupils are working at the level expected for their age and progress has improved.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are now making better progress because their needs are being carefully met. For example, individual plans are now monitored regularly so that any necessary changes can be made in a timely fashion to ensure progress is ongoing.
- The provision for pupils eligible for the pupil premium has also improved. They are making progress in line with other pupils in the school now because the current leadership team has introduced individual tuition, specialist mathematics and reading programmes, and extra phonics tuition. For example, a specialist reading programme is accelerating progress to double the expected rate. This, and similar initiatives, mean that, in many cases, the average point scores of pupils eligible for the pupil premium are similar to those for other pupils, so the school is successfully narrowing the achievement gap.
- Staff ensure that pupils from a range of ethnic groups have an equal chance of gaining success because of a real and deep commitment to equality of opportunity.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching is not consistently good across all year groups. There are pockets of better teaching but some variability remains which prevents pupils from making faster progress.
- Where teaching is less effective, teachers do not always model tasks with enough clarity to ensure all pupils are able to complete them successfully. In these lessons, teachers do not carefully assess pupils' progress as the lesson proceeds and so are not able to provide explanations or adapt tasks in a way that ensures the best progress for all.
- While marking in some classes is highly effective, this is not yet consistent. Not all teachers include comments that help pupils improve their work. Of those teachers who do, not all of them then allow time for pupils to respond to the comments they have made. This limits the effectiveness of comments and does not support pupils in understanding how to improve their work.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, teachers collect a lot of samples of children's work. However, they are not always skilled enough to interpret these in a way that ensures they then offer children the opportunity to build on their skills and interests.
- There are some stimulating activities on offer in Reception, such as the Chinese restaurant

where pupils write menus and develop their manual dexterity by playing with chopsticks. However, there are also too many instances where children are expected to sit and listen rather than play and experiment.

- The most-effective teaching harnesses pupils' interests and links learning to real-life experiences. For example, in Year 2, pupils have been studying life under the sea. Following a visit from a fishmonger and a trip to the London aquarium, pupils were well placed to write vivid descriptions of fascinating fish, using vocabulary such as 'jagged' and 'predator'. Many of these pupils have made accelerated progress in their writing skills across this topic, as well as acquiring some important scientific understanding.
- Teachers generally plan well for the range of needs in their classes. For example, in Year 6, the most-able writers were challenged to make up an original headline for the topical issue of the discovery of Richard III's bones, with great success and some very witty captions.
- Phonics is now taught well. Pupils are taught in small groups which focus on the appropriate level of challenge for them to make good gains in their phonic understanding. Those pupils who have fallen behind are given extra catch-up lessons with highly skilled staff and this is ensuring that more and more pupils are now operating at the recommended level for their age.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils behave well when moving around the school and are consistently courteous and thoughtful.
- Recent initiatives such as the training of older pupils as play leaders have ensured that pupils get on well at playtimes and everyone has fun.
- Pupils are emphatic that there are no instances of bullying because all staff deal with any potential issues in a timely and effective fashion. School records confirm this view is correct.
- Attitudes to learning are generally very positive. Even in some less-effective lessons, pupils behave well and try hard to access learning that may not have been well enough presented to them. There are occasions, however, where attention wanders if teachers' explanations are too vague.
- Pupils feel safe and know how to keep themselves safe. They are very clear, for example, about how to behave on the internet and what to do if they feel uncomfortable about anything they come across. Most parents and carers who completed the online survey agree that the school keeps their children safe.
- The school is good at ensuring pupils with particular behavioural needs are helped to manage their own behaviour well so that they are ready to learn. The good level of pastoral care ensures that rates of fixed-term exclusions are lower than nationally.
- The school places great emphasis on the importance of regular attendance and has worked well with parents and carers to reduce absence so that attendance has risen since the previous inspection and is now broadly average.

The leadership and management are good

- The senior leadership team set high expectations and have developed an atmosphere where staff feel they can contribute to the school's development. They have forged positive relationships with the local authority which has every confidence in the school's capacity to drive further improvements. The local authority has provided light-touch support to this improving school.
- Through careful monitoring, and clearly crafted measures for raising the quality of individual teachers' performance, senior leaders have eradicated inadequate teaching and ensured that all pupils now make at least expected progress.
- Senior leaders now set challenging targets for teachers and make it clear that financial rewards are dependent on meeting them.

- Leaders at all levels monitor standards in their subject areas to ensure pupils are developing skills well during their time at school. For example, the music coordinator ensures that pupils have the opportunity to learn an instrument and develop their voices by participating in the choir.
- The curriculum has been revamped so that there are strong links across different areas of learning. This has already made a positive difference to pupils' writing.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. From selecting texts with a moral message to donating harvest goods to the elderly, and from tap to 'greenfingers', pupils are given plenty of opportunities to develop a keen understanding of the world around them and how to interact with it so that it will support them as they move on to secondary school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Members of the governing body have a good grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They spend time in school, for example reading with pupils, and this helps to build solid relationships between governors and staff. Governors attend training to develop their skills and this helps them to analyse data independently. They ask challenging questions of senior leaders in their drive for improvement so that they well understand how their school compares to similar ones nationally. They ensure performance management is rigorous and have a clear picture of the quality of teaching, and of the measures senior leaders are taking to improve it. They share the conviction that only good teaching should be financially rewarded. They keep a close eye on finances and know, for example, that the pupil premium is well spent on a range of initiatives, such as extra phonics sessions, that accelerate pupils' progress. They ensure that safeguarding procedures are sound and comply with statutory requirements.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	118491
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	405775

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	394
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alan Russell
Headteacher	Georgina Salter
Date of previous school inspection	2–3 February 2011
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