

The Windmills Junior School

Dale Avenue, Hassocks, West Sussex, BN6 8LS

Inspection dates

5–6 December 2012

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Leaders, supported by the governing body, have improved the quality of teaching so that it is now consistently good.
- Pupils achieve well, making good progress in a range of subjects throughout the school.
- Pupils enjoy reading, and the school provides them with good opportunities to read widely.
- Pupils' good behaviour and positive attitudes help them to learn well. Pupils say they feel safe in school.
- Leaders are strongly committed to developing the quality of teaching and raising pupils' achievement still further.
- Leaders regularly review and adapt what is taught so that it is well matched to the needs and interests of all pupils and prepares them well for the next stage of their education.
- The governing body carefully checks school performance, and sets leaders high but realistic targets for improvement.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough emphasis is placed on ensuring that pupils develop sufficient skills to read complex words correctly.
- In a few lessons, activities do not closely correspond to the abilities of all pupils, slowing progress for some pupils.
- Teachers do not always give pupils sufficiently detailed written feedback on the quality of their work, or enough opportunities to respond to their comments.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 17 lessons, many of them together with senior leaders, and visited all the classes in the school at least once. The inspectors also made shorter visits to a number of other lessons to listen to pupils read, and attended two assemblies. They looked at samples of pupils' work from each class.
- The inspectors held discussions with groups of pupils, the Co-Chairs of the Governing Body and other members, members of staff, and a representative of the local authority. They also held informal meetings with parents and carers.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school's information on pupils' attainment and progress, safeguarding procedures and behaviour and attendance records.
- In planning and carrying out the inspection, the inspector took account of the 80 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) as well as two letters from parents and carers, and eight questionnaires completed by members of staff.

Inspection team

Robin Gaff, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Stephanie Thomas

Additional inspector

Julie Ward

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for pupil premium support (additional money allocated to schools by the government) is well below average.
- Approximately 9% of pupils are supported through school action, and about 5% are supported at school action plus or have a statement of special educational needs. These proportions are below the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- There is no alternative provision.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' achievement and improve the quality of teaching still further by ensuring that:
 - all pupils are helped to develop, more fully, the skills they need to read complex words correctly
 - teachers always give pupils tasks which are closely matched to their abilities, so that they make as much progress as possible during lessons
 - all teachers give pupils sufficiently detailed comments on their work, and enough opportunities to respond to their comments, in order to reinforce pupils' learning.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils' levels of attainment when they join the school are generally above those expected for their age. By the time pupils leave Year 6, they have achieved well, and standards, while still above average, have risen.
- More able pupils achieve well. The proportion of pupils gaining the higher levels in national tests in English and mathematics rose sharply in 2012, and the standards attained by current Year 6 pupils indicate that this trend of improvement is continuing strongly.
- School data, checked against inspectors' observations and their scrutiny of pupils' work, confirm that levels of attainment throughout the school continue to rise quickly.
- The progress made by pupils throughout the school, including those for whom the school receives additional funding, those supported by school action and by school action plus and those with statements of special educational needs, has improved particularly strongly over the last 18 months as a result of consistently good teaching.
- Standards in reading are above average. Pupils talk enthusiastically about the wide range of books they have read. Most read fluently and accurately. Occasionally, pupils stumble over more complicated words, for example 'intersected' in a mathematics lesson, because they have not grasped firmly enough the techniques needed to make completely accurate links between letters and sounds.
- The school has focused successfully on developing pupils' writing skills, and as a result, pupils write convincingly for a range of different purposes, showing a good understanding of the need for correct spelling and punctuation.
- Pupils show a good understanding of how to apply mathematical principles in order to solve problems. For example, Year 4 pupils made good progress in learning how to measure the perimeter of increasingly complex figures because the teacher gave them activities which enabled them to build successfully on what they already knew.
- Pupils are keen to learn, and are prepared to persevere as they work individually and in groups. In science, they enjoy carrying out experiments and show that they understand and can apply the concept of a fair test. In craft-based activities, they successfully design and construct models, including moon buggies as part of their current space topic.
- The range of skills pupils develop, the standards they reach, and their positive attitudes to learning indicate that they are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers have high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour. They know their subjects well, and share their enthusiasm for their subjects with pupils.
- Most lessons include activities that provide a good level of variety and challenge for pupils of all abilities. Teachers use a range of questioning techniques well to check and to develop pupils' understanding. For example, pupils made excellent progress in learning about the properties of Venn diagrams because tasks were varied and resources were used imaginatively. This meant that pupils were fully engaged in using the clues provided to solve a number of 'mysteries'. The pupils particularly enjoyed competing with one another to wear the coveted 'mathemagician' hat.
- Teachers give pupils good opportunities to learn for themselves and together with others. They explain tasks carefully, ensuring that pupils understand what they are going to learn, as well as what they are going to do.
- On the few occasions when pupils' progress is slower, this is usually because tasks are not matched closely enough to the interests and abilities of all pupils. This results in some pupils spending too long on tasks which are too easy for them, while a few struggle to complete tasks that are too complex or demanding.

- Teaching assistants ensure that disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are fully included in classroom activities, and work closely with teachers to give them well-tailored support which enables them to make good progress.
- Teachers' marking is of variable quality. Some does not include sufficient detail to reinforce pupils' learning or explain what is needed to improve further. Not all teachers successfully encourage pupils to respond in writing to their comments, so that they can check that pupils have understood and acted upon them.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils behave well in class and are keen to learn, which helps to ensure that lessons proceed at a good pace because little time is wasted. Pupils say that lessons are very rarely disrupted by poor behaviour. Pupils understand and support the school rules.
- Pupils say they feel very safe in school and that they are not worried about bullying because staff deal quickly and effectively with it on the rare occasions when it occurs. They know about different types of bullying, such as name-calling based on prejudice, and understand the ways in which the school helps to keep them safe, for example when using the internet.
- The school has succeeded in improving the behaviour of the very small number of pupils whose conduct had not met expectations, and exclusions are very rare.
- Very few parents and carers expressed any concern about pupils' behaviour or the way in which the school deals with bullying.
- Pupils are self-confident and mature for their age, and are very keen to tell visitors about their school. They enjoy taking responsibility, for example by looking after younger pupils when they start school, and they say that staff take their views seriously.
- Pupils say that they enjoy coming to school. Attendance is above average, and pupils are keen to get to school and to lessons on time.
- Pupils from different backgrounds get on well together, creating a happy and harmonious climate for learning.

The leadership and management are good

- School leaders and governors have accurately evaluated the school's performance, and successfully shared their vision for school improvement with all staff, with the result that pupils' achievement is good and attainment is rising quickly.
- The headteacher and her deputy have acted effectively to raise the quality of teaching to good. Teachers are set demanding targets for improvement and given appropriate support, including coaching and good training.
- Leaders intervene promptly when pupils are at risk of underachieving. They had identified, for example, that girls were making slower progress than boys in mathematics. Their actions, including teaching groups of boys and girls separately for a period of time, have resulted in this no longer being the case.
- The local authority has supported leaders well, for example in improving the quality of mathematics teaching. It has now correctly judged that the school is capable of succeeding with much less support than it received in the past.
- Leaders keep the subjects taught under constant review to ensure that they provide a good match to pupils' needs, abilities and interests. They ensure that suitable adaptations are made, such as small-group and one-to-one teaching, for pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium funding, so that all pupils are enabled to make good progress, equality of opportunity is provided and that there is no discrimination. The positive impact is evident in improved achievement.
- Opportunities to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are plentiful,

for instance, through out-of-school activities, visits and special events. A group of older pupils spoke excitedly about the way they had bonded as a team during a residential trip. The school's large and well-maintained collection of Javanese Gamelan musical instruments gives pupils very good opportunities for cultural development. Classrooms and the school library are well stocked with books covering a wide variety of topics.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors know the school's strengths, including its priorities for improvement, and how well pupils achieve compared with those in other schools. They hold leaders rigorously to account in improving the quality of teaching, and ensure that salary increases are used to reward good practice. Effective financial management enables the school to make good use of available resources. Governors check how the additional pupil premium money is spent, and are aware of the positive effect it is having in closing gaps in attainment for eligible pupils. Governors bring a very good level of expertise to their various roles, and frequently take up training opportunities to update their skills. They ensure that policies are regularly reviewed, including those relating to safeguarding pupils, and how effectively they are implemented.
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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	125939
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	402365

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	258
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Frances Gaudencio, Clare Seth (Co-Chairs)
Headteacher	Eileen Sharpe
Date of previous school inspection	2–3 December 2009
Telephone number	01273 842421
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