

High Down Junior School

Down Road, Portishead, North Somerset, BS20 6DY

Inspection dates

6–7 November 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		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- The progress of pupils over time requires improvement because not all groups make consistently good progress. Consequently their achievement requires improvement.
- The quality of teaching is inconsistent. This is because work is not always set at the right level for all pupils.
- The quality of work in books is too variable. Marking and feedback do not always tell pupils what they need to do to improve or give them opportunities to respond.
- Pupils do not all have a clear understanding of their targets and so are not involved enough in checking to see when they have been achieved.
- The core skills of writing and numeracy are not regularly practised with enough rigour in subjects other than English and mathematics.
- Information about the progress and attainment of pupils is overly complicated, making it more difficult to use effectively.
- There is not enough monitoring of school policies that relate to teaching and learning, leading to inconsistent practice in classes.
- Subject leaders, other than those in English and mathematics, do not have a clear understanding of the quality of teaching and so do not have action plans for improvement in their subjects.
- Checks made by the governing body are not always focused well enough on the specific areas for development.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher, through his drive for improvement, has had a positive impact on the recently increasing progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils at risk of underachievement are given appropriate support to increase their progress.
- Plans to improve the behaviour of pupils have been effective, particularly at lunchtimes, and consequently pupils' behaviour is now good and they feel safe.
- There is a wide variety of enrichment activities to support the curriculum, which has particular strengths in physical education and the performing arts.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 20 lessons taught by 14 different teachers, and held meetings with members of the governing body, staff, groups of pupils and a representative of the local authority. Three joint lesson observations were conducted, two with the headteacher and one with the deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at planning documents, monitoring records, assessment data and pupils' work.
- Inspectors took account of 77 responses to Parent View (the online questionnaire) and 28 responses to the staff questionnaire, in reaching their judgements about the school.

Inspection team

David Shears, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Francis Ashworth

Additional Inspector

Robert Arnold

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- High Down Junior is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils in receipt of the pupil premium, which is extra government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, looked after children and other groups, is below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported by school action is broadly average, and the proportion of pupils who are supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- A breakfast club and after-school care runs on the school site but is not managed by the school. Consequently this provision was not observed as part of this inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning so that it is at least consistently good or better for all pupils, including pupils in receipt of pupil premium funding and disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, by ensuring that:
 - assessment is consistently used to accurately match the level of work to the ability of all pupils
 - marking and feedback tells pupils what they need to do to improve their work and gives them regular opportunities to respond
 - pupils have the opportunity to be involved with their teachers in deciding when they have reached their targets and setting new ones
 - pupils have opportunities to produce high quality writing and further develop their mathematical skills across a wide range of subjects.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership, management and governance by ensuring that:
 - information about the progress and attainment of pupils is clearly presented in a standard format to make it easier to analyse and identify where improvements are needed
 - all whole-school policies that relate to teaching and learning are regularly and rigorously monitored to ensure that they are applied by all staff
 - teachers in charge of subjects other than English and mathematics are enabled to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects so that areas for further improvement can be identified and recorded in clear action plans
 - checks by the governing body are clearly focused on specific areas for development.
- An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils start with attainment that is above average and leave with similar attainment by the end of Year 6. This means that the progress that they make is not consistently good enough and requires improvement.
- The progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs also requires improvement. This is because the effectiveness of the support they are given is too variable. In one lesson, one pupil made good progress in producing tally charts by counting different coloured Smarties. However, in another lesson, the work for another pupil was set too high and was not attainable and so limited progress was made.
- The progress of pupils who are known to be eligible for extra support through the pupil premium requires improvement. In 2013, these pupils were four terms behind their peers in English and five terms behind in mathematics. Information about current pupils is showing that the gap in attainment is beginning to close, although the progress that these pupils make over time still requires improvement, particularly in writing and mathematics.
- Although there are a few slight variations between year groups, the progress of boys and girls is not significantly different.
- Due to an appropriate focus on improving the quality of teaching and giving extra support for particular pupils who are at risk of under-achievement, the progress of pupils has risen in the last academic year. This has resulted in a higher proportion of pupils making good progress last year. For example, the most able pupils have received extra support to ensure a higher level of challenge.
- The current attainment of pupils in reading is stronger than in writing and mathematics. This is because there has been an appropriate focus on pupils' enjoyment of reading, including the development of the school library.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because it is inconsistent through the school. This is because pupils do not always receive work that is matched closely enough to their abilities and so do not make consistently good progress.
- Pupils are given targets in English and mathematics and these are written in the front of their books. However, while they know where to look for these targets, they do not easily remember them. Teachers do not remind pupils of these sufficiently in lessons and so pupils forget to look for opportunities to practise these in their work. There is no whole-school system to help pupils to know how to check to see if they have met their targets or in setting new ones.
- There is a big disparity in the quality of marking and feedback in books. In some classes, marking is consistently applied and pupils are well aware of what they need to do to improve. There are opportunities for pupils to respond to the marking. However, more typically, marking is completed, sometimes with a positive comment, but with little information for pupils to know what to do to improve. Occasionally, work is left unmarked.
- A focus on writing last year has helped to improve pupils' skills in literacy. However, the standard of writing in pupils' literacy books is of a higher quality than when they write in other subjects. Consequently, while there are some opportunities for writing in other subjects, the lessons learned in literacy are not rigorously applied elsewhere, missing opportunities for further learning. The school recognises that, in particular, the quality of spelling still needs further attention.
- The quality of support from learning support assistants varies. Generally it is better when pupils are involved in their independent learning than during the introduction to lessons. This includes the support for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are positive because teachers plan work to interest pupils

and engage them in their learning. Interactive whiteboards are often used to enhance teaching. Pupils are told the focus for the lesson and say that they enjoy lessons. They have positive attitudes towards their work. They are adept at helping each other with their work but can equally work independently when required.

- In the best lessons, teachers check during lessons to make sure that pupils are making good progress, and intervene to correct any misconceptions or provide further challenge. Examples of outstanding teaching were seen during the inspection.
- Pupils have many enrichment opportunities to bring their learning to life. There are particular strengths in the performing arts and physical education.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils say that behaviour around the school is good and both parents and carers and staff agree. Pupils are polite and courteous to each other and towards adults. They like to help each other, and some Year 6 pupils said how they enjoy playing with the Reception children in the infant school next door. Pupils behave well at break times and enjoy playing together. The learning mentor has a pivotal role in providing support for pupils who may find good behaviour a challenge at lunchtime by having indoor activities for them to enjoy.
- Pupils have a good understanding of what constitutes bullying and know that this can happen in a variety of ways, such as verbal and cyber bullying. In particular, they are very clear about what racism is. They say that bullying is very rare in school, with one pupil adding 'because we don't tolerate that in our school'. Pupils are confident that if there are any problems, adults are always there to support them and so they feel safe.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe, including when they are using the internet.
- Pupils have a number of responsibilities, including the role of peer mediators in the playground. One such pupil described her role as 'helping others to work things out together' rather than trying to sort out problems for them.
- Pupils have a positive attitude to their work in lessons. They are attentive and enjoy participating in learning. Just occasionally, a small number of pupils can lose concentration when teaching is not strong.
- The attendance of pupils has been consistently above the national average and has continued to rise over the last three years. The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent is below average.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- School policies for a wide range of areas are established in the school. However, leaders are not rigorous enough in checking those that are related to teaching and learning, such as the marking policy, to see whether they are implemented successfully in each class. This results in the quality of teaching becoming inconsistent, which then impacts on the progress that pupils make.
- Much information about the progress and attainment of pupils is collected by the school but it is often presented in a variety of ways, sometimes making it difficult to compare one set of information with another. This can occasionally result in some discrepancies in the data.
- Senior leaders are developing well in their role as year leaders. However, subject leaders, other than those for English and mathematics, do not have enough opportunities to check the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects. This makes it difficult for them to identify what needs to improve and consequently there are no developmental action plans.
- The headteacher, along with the governing body, has a strong vision for school improvement. The school development plan has correctly identified areas for improvement, including the introduction of the teaching of phonics (the sounds letters make) to improve pupils' spelling.
- The progress of all pupils is carefully tracked and those identified as being in danger of underachieving are given further support and this is helping them to improve. This has had a

positive impact in raising the progress of pupils last year.

- The performance of teachers is checked and information gained used to inform decisions about pay.
- The extra money to support those eligible for pupil premium funding has been used to provide extra group and individual support. However, this has not yet been totally successful in ensuring that all these pupils have made good progress over time. The extra funding to support physical education is being used to fund specialist coaches to develop further the skills and knowledge of pupils in sport. There are also extra after-school clubs for pupils, which have a high take-up, so that the majority are now engaged in more physical activity, promoting their health and well-being.
- The school checks for, and deals successfully with, any discrimination, although the drive for equal opportunities is not yet fully successful because progress is not the same across all groups of pupils.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet current government requirements.
- The local authority gives appropriate support to the school, including training for the teaching of phonics and guidance for the governing body in determining a strategic plan for the future development of the school.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body has a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. It is well informed of the performance management of teachers and how it relates to their pay. Moreover, governors are aware of the funding for pupil premium pupils and how it is used. As a result of training last year, members have a growing understanding of the school's information about progress and attainment and comparing this with schools nationally. The governing body is proactive in obtaining the views of parents and carers and is keen to take helpful suggestions for improvement. Governors ask challenging questions about the effectiveness of the school. However, their own checks to verify this are not linked carefully enough to the identified main areas for development.

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	426727
Local authority	North Somerset
Inspection number	426727

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	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	353
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Joanna Pritchett
Headteacher	Jon Wood
Date of previous school inspection	22–23 November 2011
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