

Simmondley Primary School

Pennine Road, Simmondley, Glossop, SK13 6NN

Inspection dates 13–14 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		Requires improvement	3
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

- While there has been development in most key areas since the previous inspection, improvement is not yet consistently good.
- The progress pupils make as they move through the school is variable.
- Pupils do not always read, write or calculate with sufficient confidence and accuracy.
- The quality of teaching varies from class to class. Some staff do not challenge pupils of all abilities, and particularly the most able, in their work.
- The checks made of children's skills in the Early Years Foundation Stage do not form a secure basis for challenging activities.
- Areas for improvement identified by senior leaders are not followed up with sufficient rigour to address inconsistencies.
- Subject leaders do not have enough opportunities to monitor teaching and identify areas for further improvement.
- A small group of parents and carers do not believe the school takes sufficient account of their concerns.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher share a vision and determination to drive school improvement forward.
- Governance has improved since the last inspection with governors being accurately informed about key areas for development.
- Pupils with a range of abilities and needs are warmly welcomed. The school makes sure that those who need the most help receive it.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep safe. They know that all forms of bullying and poor behaviour are not acceptable.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed parts of 19 lessons taught by ten teachers, a teaching assistant and two sports coaches. This included some joint lesson observations with the headteacher and deputy headteacher. Inspectors also looked at samples of recent work and heard several pupils read.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and deputy headteacher, the Early Years Foundation Stage leader, the special educational needs coordinator and the literacy and numeracy leaders. Discussions also took place with groups of mixed ability pupils, representatives of the governing body and the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the views of 63 parents and carers as noted in the on-line parent questionnaire (Parent View) and 16 responses to the staff questionnaire. They received communications from a small number of parents and spoke to several others during the course of the inspection.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school's own information on pupils' progress, planning and monitoring information, records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Sue Hall, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Josephine Lewis	Additional Inspector
Malcolm Johnstone	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is a larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is well below average. In this school it provides additional government funding for those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and the very small number in local authority care.
- The school has a small proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds. Very few of these pupils are at the early stages of acquiring English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below the national average, as is the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- Since the previous inspection a new deputy headteacher has been appointed, together with new leaders for literacy and numeracy, and the special educational needs coordinator.
- Some classes in the school have pupils from two year groups.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that teaching across the school is consistently effective and includes examples of outstanding teaching by:
 - checking that all staff make full use of assessment information to provide work that challenges those of different abilities and particularly the most able
 - making sure that lessons are well planned and organised so that activities proceed at a good pace.
- Make sure that all pupils make consistently good progress by:
 - checking that pupils of all ages and abilities regularly practise their reading skills with a trained adult
 - ensuring that pupils have sufficient opportunities to write at length and in depth
 - providing additional opportunities for pupils to develop quick recall of number facts.
- Further improve the leadership and management of the school by:
 - checking that the assessments of children's skills in the Early Years Foundation Stage are secure and effectively used to inform planning
 - ensuring that the checks of teaching and of pupils' work identify areas for improvement which are then systematically addressed
 - making sure that parents and carers are confident that the school takes account of their concerns.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with mixed skills and experiences. Inspectors' discussions with senior staff confirm that these skills are now usually typical for their age but that in older year groups pupils often started school with skills that were above these targets.
- The school's recent data indicate that the current group of children entered Reception with skills below the expectations for their age, particularly in communicating with others and in their personal and social development. Observations by inspectors and discussions with senior leaders reveal that this does not appear to be an entirely accurate assessment and does not take full account of the children's abilities.
- As pupils move through the school, boys and girls make inconsistent progress that varies from class-to-class and which requires improvement overall. In some classes pupils make good progress and the proportion has increased since the previous inspection, especially in Key Stage 2. However, in no key stage is this yet consistently good. At times, pupils are capable of higher achievement.
- In most recent years, standards have been above national averages at the age of seven and at eleven. However, data show that pupils, including several of the most able, do not always make the progress expected of them and relatively few make more than expected progress. In recent years, standards in Key Stage 1 have often been better in reading and writing than in mathematics, but usually the other way round in Key Stage 2. This has largely been because there has not been enough consistency in the quality of teaching.
- On entry to the school, children often speak confidently and are willing and enthusiastic communicators. Many pupils across the school express themselves clearly and use a good range of words. The sampling of pupils' work shows that they successfully learn the skills to write for a range of different purposes but that there are relatively few opportunities for them to write at length and in depth, which impacts on their achievement.
- Pupils' reading skills are variable. Some pupils have a secure understanding of letters and the sounds they make (phonics) and most achieve the expected standard in checks at the end of Year 1. Some can use this knowledge to work out unfamiliar words, but others are less skilled in this area, partly because many improvements in the teaching of phonics have been quite recent. Discussions with older pupils indicate that few read individually to a trained adult and so do not always develop higher-level skills.
- The school has recently put a lot of effort into improving progress in mathematics, including through the work of a mathematics specialist working with staff. While this has led to some improvements, these are not yet consistent and pupils do not have quick recall of number facts. Therefore, they do not always work accurately and with confidence.
- Sports premium funding is used effectively to improve skills in a range of activities, including the deployment of sports coaches working alongside class teachers and in providing after-school activities. Progress was seen in a lesson where younger pupils improved their rugby catching skills.
- Recent data indicate that pupils entitled to support from the pupil premium funding did better in Key Stage 2 tests than several other groups of pupils. This is because the school has made effective use of such funding to support the further training of teachers and teaching assistants

in order to provide well-targeted individual or small-group support. There are, however, too few pupils entitled to such funding to make detailed comparisons in English and mathematics.

- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs also benefit from effective support and sometimes do well in relation to their individual targets.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because over time the quality varies and not enough is consistently good. While some teaching observed during the inspection was effective and supported by samples of the pupils' work, there was none that was outstanding or with outstanding features. There is no teaching that is inadequate but still too much that requires improvement, especially for the younger pupils and the most able.
- A key weakness across the school is that the information gained from checking pupils' skills and their work is not always used to provide the best level of challenge. This was seen when the youngest children took part in simple activities making letter shapes in the air. Some could already name and write the letter unaided and think of words starting with 'e'.
- At times activities are not well enough organised to make best use of staff and pupils' time and the pace of learning dips. This was seen in a mixed-aged class of younger children when those not working with an adult simply cut pictures from a magazine while chatting about unrelated interests. Similarly, in Year 2 many pupils worked on the same worksheet-based task, drawing rotating pictures that became more of a drawing activity and demanded little of their mathematical thinking.
- Where teaching is effective, and particularly in Key Stage 2, staff use questions well not only to check pupils understanding but also to prompt further thought. For example, in a Year 5 science lesson the teacher listened carefully to pupils' questions in order to extend explanations and improve learning about forces.
- All staff have good working relationships with pupils and give them lots of praise for their efforts, which raises self-esteem. The marking of pupils work usually follows the schools' policy and makes clear to pupils what they need to improve. However, the scrutiny of work shows this practice is not entirely consistent.
- Pupils entitled to support from pupil premium funding, together with disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, benefit from the support of a skilled group of teaching assistants. This was seen to good effect in the delivery of phonics activities which showed staff were accurate and confident in what they were doing with the pupils.

The behaviour and safety of pupils requires improvement

- While many pupils behave well in and around the school, the attitudes to learning of pupils overall require improvement because they are not consistently good and several do not always try as hard as they could do.
- Some pupils are quite passive in their learning. They offer little to discussions and leave answering and offering ideas to others. This was seen in a Key Stage 2 assembly when few volunteered answers to the questions the teacher posed. Observations in lessons also show that some do not persevere with their work and pupils' books reveal that work is not always neatly

presented.

- Pupils typically say they like school and especially being with their friends. Most have good social skills and get on happily together. They generally work well in small groups and share resources readily.
- Pupils have a secure understanding of how to stay safe. They can explain what bullying is and the different types that might occur, including cyber-bullying. While several parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire do not think that behaviour is good and that there is some bullying, discussions with pupils indicate that most believe there is little bullying and any concerns are dealt with appropriately.
- Case studies show that the school works closely with other agencies to support the most vulnerable pupils. Attendance is above average and the school discourages parents and carers from taking holidays in term time.

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- The school has been on a journey towards improvement since its last inspection, when the headteacher was very new in post and where several important weaknesses were identified. Gains have been made in several key areas but the pace of improvement has not always been smooth.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher share a clear vision for improvement and accurately recognise what works well and where development is still needed. They identify that the key areas for improvement centre around challenge and consistency in teaching. Much work has been done to ascertain what makes teaching successful and to work alongside colleagues in a coaching manner. In some areas, particularly in Key Stage 2 and in the work of teaching assistants, this support and additional training has been successful.
- Leaders check the quality of teaching and learning, and provide feedback to staff about what needs to be improved. The ways in which the school checks teacher's performance and that of support staff are fit for purpose. However, this information is not always used effectively enough to drive further improvement. The additional checks of what progress is made in the areas identified are not always as rigorous as they could be. Occasionally staff revert to their previous ways of working, including planning or marking pupils work that do not take account of the recent changes made.
- Many subject leaders are new to their roles. They carry out a scrutiny of pupils' work but action plans are not always drawn up speedily enough to address identified issues. Currently, they have few opportunities to monitor and evaluate teaching, which means they are not always in a strong enough position to influence what happens on a day-to-day basis.
- Leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage requires improvement in order to ensure that initial assessments of children's skills are accurate and used to provide the best level of challenge for all.
- The special educational needs coordinator liaises well with other staff. The school recognises this work is effective and has plans to extend the role further to ensure an even tighter focus on the progress of all pupils. Pupil premium funding is used effectively and has improved the progress of the older group of pupils.

- The way in which the school teaches different subjects ensures that pupils are provided with a broad and balanced range of activities that also support their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school is using sports premium funding appropriately, including employing sports coaches who work alongside teachers in lessons and provide a range of after school activities.
- Several of the parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire, together with those who wrote to inspectors, do not agree that provision is good in several areas or that their concerns are noted and acted upon.
- The local authority has worked closely with the school since the last inspection. They have recognised this as a priority school which has ensured a good focus on improving teaching. This has met with some success.
- This is an inclusive school that welcomes all pupils. Staff work hard to remove barriers to learning so that pupils have increasingly equal opportunity to do well. Procedures to safeguard the pupils meet current requirements. While the school may not have achieved all it set out to do since the previous inspection there is a clear path of development which shows that it has the capacity to continue to improve.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance has improved since the previous inspection. Governors are not only supportive but also now have a much clearer understanding of what the data tell them about pupil progress. This includes through the work of the curriculum committee whose members discuss in some detail the standards achieved. They check that procedures to safeguard the pupils meet requirements. They also ensure that pupil premium funding and that for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are spent appropriately to support any pupils who may be at risk of under-achieving. Governors have sound procedures to ensure that targets are set for teachers which are linked to pay and the management of performance. While some governors visit the school regularly, there is no formal programme of focused visits to ensure all governors are well informed of different aspects at first hand. Occasionally, some governors are too reliant on the school for information.

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	112706
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	424970

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	298
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Helen Howard
Headteacher	Deborah Greaves
Date of previous school inspection	6 February 2012
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