

West Rise Junior School

Chaffinch Road, Langney, East Sussex, BN23 7SL

Inspection dates 28–29 November 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils achieve well throughout the school and in a wide variety of subjects. The standards pupils reach by the time they leave have risen substantially in recent years and are now above average. This indicates that pupils make good progress from their starting points.
- Teaching is consistently good and is often outstanding. Teachers use questioning very well, have high expectations of pupils and are knowledgeable and enthusiastic about their subjects.
- Senior leaders have made sure that any relative weaknesses in teaching have been remedied quickly and effectively.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is outstanding. They show extremely positive attitudes to learning and have many opportunities to take on responsibility.
- Pupils have no concerns about bullying and know exactly what to do to prevent it from occurring.
- The headteacher, his senior team and all the staff and governors have a clear vision for their school. They are passionately committed to ensuring that pupils reach the highest standards possible and benefit from a broad and stimulating education.
- The school makes very good use of its unique site. The curriculum promotes all aspects of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development extremely well, providing pupils with many different, exciting experiences.
- Governors have a good knowledge and understanding of how well the school is doing, and what senior staff have done to improve the quality of teaching.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- Achievement is not outstanding because not enough pupils reach the highest levels in English and mathematics by the time they leave the school.
- Teachers do not always provide pupils with detailed enough comments about their work, or give them sufficiently regular opportunities to respond fully to their comments.
- Not all parents and carers fully appreciate the success of the school's systems for ensuring that pupils behave well and that bullying is tackled effectively, and a small number do not feel that the school pays enough attention to their concerns.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 10 lessons, three of them together with school leaders, for varying amounts of time, observing all the classes in the school and all the teachers who were present during the inspection at least once. They also made shorter visits to a number of other lessons and other activities, looked at pupils' written work, listened to pupils read, attended an assembly, and visited some of the school's after-school clubs.
- Inspectors held discussions with groups of pupils, the vice chair and another member of the governing body, and members of staff. They held informal discussions with a number of parents and carers. The lead inspector also met the headteacher of the neighbouring infant school and spoke by telephone with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents, including the school's information on pupils' attainment and progress, and data on attendance. They examined safeguarding procedures and records of the school's own lesson observations, as well as the school's self-evaluation, performance management and planning documents.
- In planning and carrying out the inspection, inspectors took account of 34 responses to the Ofsted online survey Parent View which were submitted before or during the inspection. They also considered the results of the school's most recent survey of pupils' views, as well as a letter received from a parent or carer and 26 questionnaires completed by members of the teaching and support staff.

Inspection team

Robin Gaff, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Janet Watson

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below the national average.
- More than two fifths of the pupils are eligible for the pupil premium, which is additional funding provided for children in local authority care, children with a parent or carer in the armed services and those known to be eligible for free school meals. This proportion is well above the national average. There are no pupils with a parent or carer in the armed services currently on roll.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs who are supported through school action is well above the national average. About one in seven pupils is supported through school action. The proportion of pupils, about one in 12, who are supported at school action plus or have a statement of special educational needs is above the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- There have been several changes of staff since the school's last inspection, including of teachers holding posts of responsibility.
- The school has substantially developed its facilities for outdoor learning in recent years, including a large wetland area, 'The Marsh', leased from the local council, which forms the habitat of a variety of species of wild bird, as well as sheep and a small herd of water buffalo.
- The remains of a major Bronze Age settlement have been discovered on the school's site, and a replica village of the period is currently under construction.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement to outstanding by ensuring that teachers always give pupils:
 - sufficiently detailed comments on their work so that pupils understand exactly what they have done well and the next steps they need to take to make their work even better
 - regular opportunities to respond to teachers' comments by correcting or extending their work.
- Improve the effectiveness of the ways in which the school communicates with parents and carers in order to ensure that all of them:
 - fully understand how the school makes sure its pupils are well behaved and deals with any rare instances of bullying
 - have every confidence that the school listens to their concerns.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Pupils throughout the school achieve well in reading, writing, mathematics and a variety of other subjects.
- Pupils join the school with levels of attainment which are broadly in line with national averages, although they are rising. The standards they reach in English and mathematics by the time they leave, as represented by their performance in national assessments at the end of Year 6, have risen substantially in recent years, and at a faster rate than found in schools nationally. As a result, pupils' overall attainment is now consistently above the national average. Their results indicate that all groups of pupils, including those who speak English as an additional language, make good progress from their starting points.
- The standards reached in English in the 2013 national assessments by those pupils who were eligible for the pupil premium were broadly in line with those of other pupils in the school and of all pupils nationally. In mathematics, these pupils were about half a term behind others in the school and all pupils nationally.
- This, together with the good progress these pupils had made from their starting points, demonstrates the school's success in using the additional pupil premium funding, for example by providing individuals with small-group and one-to-one teaching. It also shows how well the school is promoting equality of opportunity.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make progress which is at least as good as that of their classmates. This is because the headteacher carefully monitors how well they are doing and, working closely with class teachers and other adults in and outside of the school, makes sure that they receive the support they need in order to succeed.
- Pupils have a good grasp of phonics (the links between letters and the sounds they make) because teachers give them a good grounding in this important skill. This enables them to read aloud fluently and accurately, showing a good understanding of the text. Pupils talk enthusiastically about their favourite books, covering a wide range of topics. Pupils also enjoy writing and have many good opportunities to write well, at length and in a variety of styles and genres, about the different topics about which they are learning. Examples of this include pieces of writing about the Tudors, and the school's unique setting. This has resulted in a collection of poems written by pupils, 'If a water buffalo could sing', being published locally.
- The school has identified and successfully addressed the reasons for a small dip in results in mathematics this year. As a result, current pupils are making good progress in mathematics as well as in reading and writing. Pupils, including those who are more able, gain a good grasp of mathematical principles and techniques, such as problem solving. For example, Year 4 pupils very rapidly mastered the processes necessary to accurately calculate the perimeter of a rectangle, thanks to the teacher's lively and thorough explanations and her excellent use of questioning to check and develop pupils' understanding.
- Pupils make at least good and often outstanding progress in subjects such as science, geography, art and music. The high quality of pupils' singing and of their artwork as well as their having gained a national award for sculpture provide typical examples of this.
- Pupils' progress in and enthusiasm for all these areas of learning, and the wide range of skills they develop, show how well they are prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Senior leaders know that for achievement to be outstanding, more pupils need to reach the higher Levels 5 and 6 in English and mathematics by the end of Key Stage 2, and have put in place measures which are ensuring that current pupils are on track to do so.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teachers have established very good relationships with pupils and have inspired them, in many cases, with their enthusiasm for and knowledge of the range of subjects they teach. They have

high expectations of pupils in terms of both work and behaviour, and ensure that lessons move along at a good pace.

- Pupils benefit from a good variety of activities during lessons, including small-group discussions, practical work and whole-class debates. Teachers make sure that tasks are well adapted to meet the needs of all the pupils in their classes, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, so that lessons usually provide pupils with sufficient challenge. Teachers work closely with teaching assistants and other adults to ensure that all pupils play a full part in classroom activities.
- Teachers' use of questioning is a particular strength. Teachers check pupils' understanding thoroughly throughout lessons and use open-ended questions to encourage pupils to think deeply about topics. Teachers also make very good use of pupils' answers to prompt further discussion and learning. An excellent example of this was when the teacher accompanying pupils on a visit to The Marsh expertly used pupils' own observations to help them gain an in-depth understanding of how the wind enables reeds to scatter their seeds.
- Teachers regularly and carefully assess the quality of pupils' work, making sure that any who are at risk of falling behind are identified quickly and given the extra support they need. They mark pupils' written work regularly, emphasising the need for accuracy and good presentation, including when completing writing and mathematical tasks.
- Pupils know how well they are doing and what they need to do to reach their targets. Teachers do not always, however, give pupils sufficiently detailed feedback to enable them to know precisely what they have done well and the next steps they need to take to improve their work. Teachers do not give pupils frequent enough opportunities to respond to their written comments, for example by writing corrections or including more detail in their writing.
- Teaching is almost always at least good and has improved since the school's last inspection. Over time, however, there has not been enough outstanding teaching to enable pupils to make consistently excellent progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils say that they enjoy school a great deal and are extremely proud of it. They are very keen to tell visitors about its special features and how much they benefit from them, and are articulate and self-confident without being in the least arrogant.
- Pupils show excellent attitudes in class. They are exceptionally keen to learn and listen avidly to what their teachers and their classmates have to say. Pupils are eager to answer questions and to take part in discussions, and do so in a mature and self-disciplined way.
- Around and outside the school, pupils behave very sensibly and safely, for example when using playground equipment. They are extremely considerate of and caring towards one another, especially when they realise that someone younger than themselves needs help. Pupils from different backgrounds get on very well together, and there is no trace of any discrimination.
- Pupils report that they feel completely safe in school and have no concerns whatsoever about bullying. They know what it is, though, and are very much aware of the potential dangers posed by misuse of information and communication technology (ICT), such as cyber bullying. Pupils show an extremely mature understanding of why disputes occur and what to do to resolve them. They also fully understand how to keep safe from potential hazards relating to the school's environment, knowing, for example, that the presence of reeds indicates deep water.
- The school has put in place very successful measures to improve the attendance and behaviour of the small number of pupils for whom either of these has been a cause for concern. Pupils were very proud to introduce Max the (toy) Attendance Water Buffalo to their visitors.

The leadership and management are good

- The dynamic and highly enthusiastic headteacher works effectively and harmoniously with his

senior team and has succeeded in sharing his passion for improving pupils' achievement and their well-being with all the staff. Senior leaders have accurately judged the quality of what the school does and its impact on pupils' performance, and have acted decisively to eliminate any examples of weak teaching. Working closely with the governing body, senior leaders have identified appropriate priorities for further development. They manage the staff's performance very well.

- Staff, including those who are new to the profession or to their positions of responsibility, embrace their challenging but realistic targets for improvement and confirm the effectiveness of the support and training they receive.
- The school works well with others in the vicinity, including the neighbouring infant school as well as local secondary schools, to ensure that pupils make smooth transitions between different stages of their education. The local authority has provided good quality, light-touch support for the school, for example by providing training, at the school's request, for new governors and on specific aspects of the curriculum.
- Pupils benefit from a rich and diverse curriculum which enables them to make extremely productive links between different aspects of learning, including reading and writing, the creative arts, history and science. Pupils are given many opportunities to take responsibility, for example as committee members and play leaders, and learn how to manage their own budgets, a proportion of which they raise themselves. In Year 6, they are given an early insight into the world of work by visiting speakers representing various occupations and professions.
- Pupils also benefit from a large variety of after-school clubs, including different sports and physical activities such as cheer-leading, capoeira and, occasionally, clay-pigeon shooting, expertly led and carefully supervised by specialists. The school has made very good use of the additional sports premium funding to introduce new sports, for example girls' rugby, which is already succeeding in increasing pupils' participation in healthy activities and raising their levels of performance.
- All but a very few parents and carers are supportive of the school, many of them highly so. Almost all believe that their children are well taught and that they receive appropriate homework for their age. A very large majority agree that their children are happy in school. Nevertheless, despite a considerable body of evidence to the contrary, a small number of parents and carers are not convinced that the school makes sure its pupils are well behaved, or deals effectively with bullying, or responds well to any concerns they may raise. School leaders, and the governing body, are fully aware of the need to improve systems for ensuring that parents' and carers' concerns in these respects are firmly allayed.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Since the last inspection, the governing body has improved the effectiveness with which it supports and challenges school leaders. Governors, including those who have been elected relatively recently, bring a good range of experience and expertise to their role, and are keen to update their knowledge by undertaking relevant training. Governors visit the school frequently and share their findings from these visits to good purpose. They know how well the school is doing and how pupils' results compare with those of their peers in other schools. They are very much aware of the quality of teaching and what senior staff have done to improve it, including through performance management and by making sure that any pay increases are closely related to achievement of the school's targets. Governors know how the additional pupil premium and sports funding is being used to improve pupils' achievement and enhance their well-being. They make sure that all requirements with regard to safeguarding children are met. Their careful management of the school's finances has enabled leaders to achieve the school's ambition to provide pupils with an innovative and inspiring environment in which they can thrive. These factors, together with leaders' strong commitment to and success in bringing about improvement, demonstrate the school's capacity to improve still further.

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	114467
Local authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	426584

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	234
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Angus Scott
Headteacher	Mike Fairclough
Date of previous school inspection	26–27 November 2008
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