

Cottage Grove Primary School

Chivers Close, Southsea, PO5 1HG

Inspection dates 5–6 February 2014

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 school requires improvement. It is not yet good because

- Teaching is not consistently good. Activities are not always well matched to all the abilities in the class and so do not ensure that every pupil makes consistently good progress.
- Teachers do not always have a clear view of what pupils should do or are capable of achieving by the end of the lesson.
- Although improving, pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is not high enough.
- Pupils' understanding and correct use of grammar, punctuation and spelling are not sufficiently well taught.
- Teachers' expectations of pupils' work in some subjects are not as high as they are in English and mathematics so they are not ensuring their skills are appropriately used and extended in other subjects.

The school has the following strengths

- Prior to September when there were significant changes in staff, the successful work of the senior leaders in improving teaching and so raising pupils' achievement were clearly evident. Effective strategies are in place to ensure this continues.
- One result of this improved teaching has been a better quality of pupils' writing in Years 1 and 2.
- Pupils in Years 1 and 2 now have a much stronger understanding of phonics than in the past and they are using their knowledge well to support their reading and writing.
- The provision for pupils in the Nursery is good and excellent in the Reception classes. Children make outstanding progress from well below expected starting points.
- Pupils of all backgrounds get on exceedingly well. Pupils new to the school settle quickly and are well supported by all staff.
- Pupils are safe and secure and the vast majority of pupils behave well; they enjoy learning, try hard and want to succeed.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 25 lessons led by 15 members of staff. Many of the lessons were joint observations undertaken with the headteacher and senior staff. These sessions included one on the teaching of letters and the sounds they make (phonics) and a guided reading session.
- The inspectors held a meeting with two members of the governing body and with groups of pupils. The lead inspector met with a representative from the local authority. In addition to a number of meetings with members of staff, the questionnaires completed by 35 members of staff were taken into account.
- The views of parents were collected from brief informal meetings with a few parents who were visiting the school and from responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire (Parent View).
- The inspectors reviewed a wide range of documentation, including the school’s analysis of pupils’ progress, teachers’ lesson plans, the school’s action plan, leaders’ monitoring records, reports written about the school, pupils’ work, case studies of pupils’ progress and the record of checks made on staff’s suitability to work with children.

Inspection team

Hazel Callaghan, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Peter Thrussell	Additional inspector
Gillian Coffey	Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Cottage Grove is much larger than most primary schools. Its pupils come from a wide range of ethnic groups. The largest group are of White British heritage. The next largest group are Bangladeshi.
- A higher than average proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language. A greater than average proportion of pupils start school with no knowledge of English.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is significantly above that found in schools nationally. This is additional government funding provided for pupils who are eligible for free school meals, those who are looked after by the local authority and those with a parent in the armed forces.
- A significant number of pupils in the school who are eligible for the pupil premium grant also have special needs and some are vulnerable because of the challenges they face in their lives.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special needs who are at the school action level of support is a little above average. The proportion supported at school action plus level or with a statement of special educational needs is also similar to that found nationally.
- The school has a greater than average proportion of pupils who join the school at times other than expected. Mobility is high throughout the school year.
- The school meets the current floor standards set by the government which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.
- There were significant changes in staffing at the start of last term and changes in the teaching groups with Key Stage 2.
- The school runs a breakfast club for pupils in the school, which was part of this inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure teaching is never less than good so pupils make consistently good progress and their attainment in reading, writing and mathematics rises by:
 - ensuring teachers have a clear focus on what they want pupils to achieve by the end of the lesson
 - making sure all lessons are carefully planned so that activities match the range of abilities and needs of the class and they challenge pupils' thinking,
 - maintaining high expectations for the quality of pupils' work in all subjects, so pupils use and further strengthen their skills, especially those in reading, writing and mathematics,
 - ensuring teachers focus more regularly on developing pupils' understanding of grammar and the correct use of punctuation and spelling.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' attainment has been generally below average for some years. This is partly due to pupils' very low starting points, and partly to the high levels of pupils moving in and out of the school, many of whom have challenges in their lives that create barriers to learning. A high proportion of pupils start school with very little knowledge of English and this also creates barriers to their learning. In the past, pupils' progress has not been sufficient to raise attainment to broadly average.
- Standards in the test of pupils' use and understanding of grammar, punctuation and spelling introduced last year were also below average.
- Although below average, attainment has been rising steadily at a faster rate than was seen nationally. More pupils across the school are reaching the expected levels in reading, writing and mathematics but few more able pupils reached the higher levels in Year 2 and Year 6 in the past.
- During the last academic year, the good focus on raising teaching and learning resulted in improved progress for all groups, including those eligible for free school meals, those with special needs and the more able. This included pupils in Year 6 but it was not enough to make up for the legacy of slower progress in the past, which is why pupils' attainment remained below average.
- In September 2013, there were many changes to staff, and despite the school's good efforts the rate of progress slowed. Most pupils are now making expected progress whereas more of them made good progress before. This was true for all groups of pupils, including the more able, but the impact on reading, writing and mathematics varied.
- Children enter the nursery with levels of knowledge and skills well below those expected, especially in their personal care, language and social skills. They make good progress in the Nursery, which prepares them well for learning in Reception.
- Almost half of the children in Reception come up from the Nursery; the rest originate from a wide range of smaller early years providers in the area. Most of these children show levels of knowledge and skills that are well below those expected for their age. Children make outstanding progress in Reception to reach broadly average levels of attainment on entry to Year 1. These excellent levels of progress have been evident over the last two years and are beginning to have a significant impact on raising attainment in Key Stage 1.
- Attainment in the phonics check made in Year 1 and in Year 2 were better than average. Pupils use this knowledge well to support their reading and writing, which are improving. Pupils' writing skills are developing rapidly because pupils are keen to do well and are confident in their abilities and because of the good teaching they receive.
- Pupils who start school in the early stages of speaking English are well supported by a range of appropriate resources and by the one-to-one support of language support assistants.
- The progress of pupils eligible for the pupil premium grant mirrors that of other pupils and last year, gaps between their attainment and that of other pupils reduced in reading, writing and mathematics.
- These improvements were due to improved teaching and a clear focus on what was needed to support pupils' learning.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Since September, there have been considerable changes in staffing, both of teachers and support assistants and in the teaching arrangements. Teaching currently is not consistently good.
- Pupils' spelling is often inaccurate and they do not use punctuation correctly because there is not

- a strong enough focus on teaching grammar, punctuation and spelling, especially in Key Stage 2.
- Much of the teaching is good but not all lesson plans provide a range of activities that match the range of ages, abilities and needs in the class and so tasks do not sufficiently enable pupils of all abilities to move forward effectively in their learning.
 - Sometimes teachers have not fully identified exactly what pupils need to achieve by the end of the lesson and so there is insufficient challenge for some pupils, especially the most able and those with special needs.
 - Teachers' expectations for the quality of work completed in subjects other than English and mathematics are not sufficiently high. The quality of writing, for example, is not high enough; consequently pupils do not practise their knowledge and skills at the right level.
 - Pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium grant are well known to staff and supported well in class. This enables them to make the same progress as their peers, or better.
 - Reading is taught well. The school had concerns over the progress of some pupils last year and an effective range of strategies to support reading were developed. One particular reading strategy is used successfully to support those who are likely to be falling behind, particularly those eligible for the pupil premium grant.
 - During the last academic year, teaching was more successful than it is currently and pupils of all abilities made good progress. Teachers' marking was supported at this time and it provides pupils with a strong focus on what they do well and how to improve. Pupils say the teachers are very effective in helping them in this way.
 - Teaching assistants provide an important partnership with teachers in supporting pupils' learning. Those who are experienced show good levels of expertise in teaching groups of pupils, and those with special training and support are successful in teaching whole classes. The support provided for pupils in the early stages of learning English is good and they make initially very good progress. After the extensive support which gives them a solid basis in the language, they make similar progress to their peers.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The vast majority of pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and are keen and motivated learners. Pupils respond well in lessons, share ideas confidently and work well individually, in pairs and in groups. The oldest pupils in Year 5 and 6 often show a thirst for knowledge and apply themselves well. In Years 1 and 2, pupils were seen to be enthusiastic about their writing. They respond well to the teachers' encouragement and willingly tried new ideas to improve their work. They are proud of their efforts and celebrate each other's successes.
- Pupils say they enjoy their activities and want to do well. Lessons are very rarely disrupted by inappropriate behaviour and most pupils show good levels of concentration and attention. Pupils' sensible attitudes make a strong contribution to a safe positive learning environment.
- Behaviour is good around the school, in assemblies and in lessons. Pupils of all ethnic groups get on well and the school is a racially harmonious community. Pupils say behaviour is good and bullying of any kind is rare, especially any physical, emotional or cyber-bullying. Pupils say any upsets or disagreements are quickly and effectively sorted out by the staff and by the 'Squabble Busters' in Year 6.
- Pupils say that those children who are new to the school are not always well behaved and have to learn how to behave like 'Cottage Grove pupils', which they usually do quickly following the good examples of the other children.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils feel very safe at school. They have a good grounding in recognising potential dangers, such as when using the internet. They have developed an appropriate range of strategies to keep themselves safe. They are curious, courteous and polite to visitors.
- The vast majority of pupils attend regularly, they enjoy school and attendance has risen in the last few years to broadly average. The number of persistent absentees, however, is above the national picture but reducing as the work of the school has an impact on those families who do

not reliably help their children to attend.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and senior leaders have a good track record of improving the quality of teaching and accelerating pupils' progress. Strategies to support teachers who need further professional development have proved successful and performance management has been used effectively to reward good teaching and highlight that which needs improvement.
- Prompt and accurate analysis of records monitoring pupils' attainment and progress have led to identification of pupils who are underachieving and interventions being set in motion to improve their learning. A clear system of identification of pupils eligible for the pupil premium in this quickly changing community is used effectively to monitor their progress and ensure they receive high levels of support and encouragement.
- Senior leaders and governors have high expectations for all pupils and middle leaders are increasingly having a positive impact in developing their roles and moving their subjects forward.
- Pupils are well supported; those who are admitted into school throughout the year are assessed and gaps in learning identified so that interventions are set in motion promptly.
- Unfortunately a significant number of changes in staffing this academic year have stalled this good progress. Much of the teaching is still good and some is outstanding but the consistency is not as strong. Strategies of support are once more in place but it is too soon to see the full impact of this work. The local authority provides appropriate support for the school.
- The school is a highly harmonious community and all staff are committed to ensuring pupils' equal chances in finding success. Pupils' spiritual, social moral and cultural development is well promoted through a broad-based curriculum. There is a strong focus on developing pupils' reading, writing and mathematical skills but opportunities to extend these skills are sometimes missed in other subjects.
- The school has chosen to use the new government funding for PE and sport to employ sports specialists who work with staff to develop their expertise, so sustaining good teaching after the funding has gone. It is too soon to see if it has an impact on raising pupils' interest and skills or on further developing pupils' health and wellbeing.
- The school works hard to build partnerships with parents, especially staff in the Nursery and Reception, supporting vulnerable families and promoting their better understanding of how young pupils learn.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Many governors have a good understanding of school data and challenge the headteacher about pupils' achievement. They use a variety of data to help them evaluate the school's performance compared to that of other schools, recognising the many factors that complicate the picture of achievement.
 - Governors are fully involved in discussions about the use of the pupil premium funding and make a check on the impact on pupils' achievement.
 - Governors attend regular training. They are kept informed of the outcomes of performance management and are committed to rewarding good teaching and effective management.
 - They are fully supportive of the school's commitment to working closely with parents to help them understand how children learn and how they can support them at home.
 - Governors carry out their responsibilities to ensure a safe and secure environment and all safeguarding requirements are met.

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	116203
Local authority	Portsmouth
Inspection number	431045

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	415
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Nicola Waterman
Headteacher	Polly Honeychurch
Date of previous school inspection	27–28 June 2012
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