

Mundella Primary School

Black Bull Road, Folkestone, Kent, CT19 5QX

Inspection dates

13–14 March 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		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement.

- Achievement requires improvement because pupils do not make rapid enough progress. Standards by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are below average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teachers do not always have high enough expectations and so pupils are not sufficiently challenged to learn as well as they can.
- The agreed school approaches to teaching and learning are not consistently implemented across the school.
- Teachers do not always manage behaviour consistently well in lessons and so pupils are not always learning as well as they can.
- Not all teachers use the school's detailed information on achievement or their own assessments effectively enough when planning work to ensure that all pupils make good progress.
- Attendance is below average.
- Some subject leaders are still developing their responsibility for pupils' learning and achievement.

The school has the following strengths:

- Since the appointment of the new headteacher, the school is improving. The headteacher and senior leaders have a clear view of what the school needs to do to ensure further, rapid improvement.
- Senior leaders check pupils' progress carefully and this is helping to improve the quality of teaching and raise pupils' achievement.
- Pupils generally behave well in the playground, at lunchtimes and in assemblies.
- Knowledgeable and well-informed governors are challenging and supporting the school's leaders to improve teaching and raise pupils' achievement.
- Pupils feel safe and well cared for. The school does outstandingly well in providing support and encouragement for the most vulnerable pupils.
- Children get a good start to school in the Early Years Foundation Stage and make good progress.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 10 lessons or part lessons, most of which were joint observations with the headteacher or deputy headteacher. In addition, inspectors talked to pupils about their work, looked at books and listened to some pupils read.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and other staff with key leadership responsibilities. Discussions were also held with pupils, governors and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of documentation including: the school’s own check on its performance including the quality of teaching; the school improvement plan; information on pupils’ progress; and documents relating to safeguarding.
- There were too few responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, for inspectors to have access to the results, but inspectors spoke to 13 parents and carers at the start of the school day. They also looked at 27 questionnaires returned by staff.

Inspection team

Margaret Coussins, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Michael Jude

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is above average, as is the proportion supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives additional funds (pupil premium) is over double that found nationally. This is additional funding for those known to be eligible for free school meals, who are in care or who are from service families.
- In 2013, the school did not meet the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school makes provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage in a Reception class.
- There is a nursery on the school site, which is managed by a private provider and subject to a separate inspection.
- The school provides a daily breakfast club.
- The headteacher was appointed in September 2012 and the deputy headteacher in September 2013.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that it is consistently good or better, in order to raise pupils' achievement, by ensuring that:
 - all staff consistently follow the school's policy for teaching and learning
 - expectations and challenge for learning are always high so that all pupils make the progress of which they are capable
 - staff manage behaviour in line with the school policy and have high expectations, so that pupils' behaviour in lessons improves and helps them to learn well
 - all teachers use the school's information on pupils' progress and their own assessments to plan work that is sufficiently challenging for pupils of all abilities.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - making sure that middle leaders take on more responsibility for improving the quality of teaching and pupils' progress in their subjects
 - building on the positive relationships with parents and carers and working together with them to improve attendance.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because, over time, pupils have not made enough progress and standards in reading, writing and mathematics are below average.
- In the 2013 national tests and assessments, standards improved from the previous year but remained below average, particularly in writing at the end of Key Stage 2.
- Pupils' work and the school's checks on progress show that, overall, pupils currently in the school are making more rapid progress and so standards are improving. However, this is not consistent across the school and therefore some pupils are not making fast enough progress to catch up in their learning.
- Pupils in Year 6 are on track to achieve at least average standards by the end of the year because they are making rapid progress as a result of good teaching.
- Achievement in writing is improving because leaders have introduced new and effective approaches. In reading, the promotion of reading for enjoyment and work based on interesting, good quality texts is helping to raise standards and progress. In mathematics, the school has identified mental mathematics skills as a weaker area and taken steps to address this.
- Children start at the school in the Reception class with skills and knowledge that are generally well below the levels expected for their age. They make good progress because they are taught well. However, the proportion achieving a good level of development is below average by the time they start in Year 1, particularly in speaking and writing.
- In the screening check for phonics (the sounds that letters make) in 2012 and 2013, the proportion of pupils in Year 1 reaching the expected standard was below average. Leaders have introduced a structured whole-school approach to phonics teaching and training for staff. As a result, pupils are now making more rapid progress in acquiring phonics skills and are on track to meet the school's target of a higher proportion than national reaching the expected standard.
- In the 2013 national tests, the attainment of pupils in Year 6 who received support funded by the pupil premium was around eight months behind that of their classmates in reading and mathematics and around six months behind in writing. However, from their starting points at the end of Year 2, these pupils did better than others in the school. Current progress for eligible pupils is similar to others' in that some are making good progress but that this is inconsistent across all classes.
- Strong leadership and increasingly well-targeted support for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is helping to raise achievement. However, as with all pupils, progress varies from class to class. Teaching assistants overall provide good support for these pupils who mostly ensure that their needs are well met.
- Higher expectations and support for the most able pupils are challenging this group to make more rapid progress, particularly in reading and writing. As a result, there are more pupils on track to reach the higher levels by the end of Key Stage 2.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because not enough has been good or better over time. The school's checks on the quality of teaching show that teaching is improving and some is good, but inconsistencies remain across the school. There is not yet enough consistently good and outstanding teaching to ensure that pupils make up lost ground in their learning and achieve as well as they should.
- Teachers do not always manage behaviour well and as a result pupils do not gain new skills and knowledge effectively in some lessons.
- Pupils' learning over time, as shown in their books and school records, is not good enough to ensure they make rapid progress. This is because expectations are not consistently high enough

across all classes and there is sometimes insufficient challenge to promote higher achievement.

- The school has clear, agreed policies for teaching and learning but these are not consistently implemented by all teachers, and therefore pupils receive mixed messages about learning which hinders their achievement.
- Sometimes teachers do not take enough account of the school's system for tracking pupils' progress or their own assessments when planning work, to ensure that it is sufficiently challenging for pupils of different abilities. This is hindering progress.
- Where teaching is most effective pupils are engrossed in their learning and want to do well. Pupils in Year 6, for example, were able to discuss what they had learned in a mathematics lesson on mode and median and demonstrated that they made good progress in acquiring skills and knowledge.
- There are some highly skilled teaching assistants who make a good contribution to pupils' learning. They often provide well-targeted support for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, as well as other vulnerable groups and individuals, to ensure that these pupils are able to fully participate in lessons. Sometimes, however, teaching assistants are not clear about their role in learning because they receive insufficient direction from teachers.
- There are some good examples of marking that help pupils know how to improve their work but the quality is inconsistent across the school.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught well. There are good relationships between adults and children and exciting, interesting activities are provided inside and outside, with a good balance between those directed by adults and those chosen by children. Children were very excited about planting seeds and one child talked in great detail about the stages to go through to produce a sunflower.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

require improvement

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement because some pupils do not always behave appropriately in lessons. This is mainly due to weaker teaching that does not fully engage or motivate pupils or when teachers do not consistently use the school's agreed behaviour policy or have high enough expectations for pupils' behaviour in class. As a result, some pupils often become inattentive and distracted, which hampers their learning.
- However, behaviour in the playground, at lunchtime and in assemblies is generally good. Pupils are friendly and welcoming and keen to talk about their school. They are polite and courteous to visitors.
- Pupils understand the recently revised behaviour policy and it has had a successful impact in gradually reducing the number of behaviour incidents. Parents and carers who spoke to inspectors at the start of the day agreed that their children feel safe and are well looked after, and that behaviour had recently improved.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say they feel safe and that bullying is very rare, although some pupils do not always behave well. They understand that bullying can take different forms and are confident to turn to staff should any problems arise.
- Attendance is below average. The school works hard to promote regular attendance and punctuality and pupils are keen to receive an award for the best weekly class attendance.
- Pupils who attend the breakfast club get a good, healthy and sociable start to the school day.

The leadership and management

require improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because, despite recent improvements, pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching have not been good enough over time.
- Since he took up the appointment, the headteacher has worked very effectively to improve the school. He is ambitious in his drive to provide the best possible teaching and learning for pupils, and senior leaders and governors share his vision. The changes that have been introduced mean

that the school is in a secure position to improve further. There are improvements in teaching and achievement is rising, but actions taken have not yet had a full effect to secure consistently good teaching and good progress.

- Senior leaders, including governors, have a thorough and accurate picture of what the school does well and where it needs to improve. The school improvement plan has a clear focus on improving the quality of teaching and raising pupils' achievement.
- Frequent checks are made on the quality of teaching. Where weaknesses are identified, senior leaders provide support and expect to see improvements.
- Staff performance is managed well. Pay and responsibilities are linked well to pupils' progress and targets are closely related to the school improvement priorities. Appropriate training is provided for all staff to implement the school's approaches to, for example, reading, writing and phonics, and to develop individual skills and expertise.
- Subject leaders' roles and responsibilities are clear. They are developing their knowledge and skills in leading their areas but do not yet have full accountability for improving the quality of teaching and pupils' progress.
- Rigorous systems to check pupils' progress ensure that any underachievement is identified and extra help is provided. As a result, the gaps in performance between different groups are beginning to close. This shows the leadership's clear commitment to equality of opportunity, although leaders know that not all pupils are yet achieving as well as they could.
- The school offers a broad and balanced range of subjects with additional opportunities through special event weeks. For example, pupils spoke with enthusiasm about the recent 'MADD' week where the focus was on music, art, dance and drama and said it was great fun. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted adequately through the curriculum and the school's values.
- The school provides a caring atmosphere for pupils and they learn without fear of discrimination. Pupil premium funding is, in part, used to ensure that pupils, particularly those who may be vulnerable, have access to the opportunities offered by the school. A nurture room has been created and offers outstanding provision to pupils who are particularly vulnerable. Funding has also been spent on additional staff and resourcing. The impact is evident in the improving progress of eligible pupils in developing better literacy and numeracy skills, which are more in line with those of other pupils.
- The additional primary sports funding is being used successfully. A specialist sports coach works with teachers to develop their skills to sustain improvement in the long term. An increased range and variety of sports available to pupils in after-school clubs has enabled more pupils to participate, develop skills and broaden the range of their sporting activities. These initiatives are contributing positively to pupils' well-being and health.
- Parents and carers spoken with at the start of the day were very positive about the school and commented on positive changes and improvements since the new headteacher was appointed.
- The school works well in partnership with other local schools to share skills and expertise. The local authority holds the school to account for its performance and has every confidence in the headteacher and senior leaders to secure the necessary improvements.

■ **The governance of the school:**

The governing body is committed to the school and the drive for improvement. It is fully aware that the school is not yet where it should be because governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They are well informed by the headteacher and their own monitoring, which enables them to question and challenge school leaders and hold the school to account for its performance. Governors have a clear understanding of the school's data and so know how well the school is performing in relation to schools nationally. They have a good awareness of the school's pay and promotion processes and check the performance of staff, including that of the headteacher, and the quality of teaching. The governing body knows how the school uses the pupil premium funding and the sports funding to make a difference to pupils' attainment and progress. Statutory duties, including safeguarding requirements, are fully 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	118384
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	431029

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	187
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Andrew Ross
Headteacher	Nigel Pantling
Date of previous school inspection	14–15 March 2012
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