

Gillingham Primary School

School Road, Gillingham, Dorset, SP8 4QR

Inspection dates 22–23 May 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		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Until recently, pupils in Key Stage 1 did not make enough progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- There is not enough good teaching across the school. Not all teaching challenges the most-able pupils to reach the highest levels.
- Marking is not always thorough and does not give pupils enough guidance on how to improve their work.
- The presentation of work in pupils' books is not of a good standard.
- Leaders in charge of subjects are not playing a full part in supporting colleagues to improve teaching.
- The recent work of leaders and managers has not had enough time to have a full impact on the quality of teaching and pupils' progress.

The school has the following strengths

- The senior leadership team has started to bring about improvements in teaching. Governors are supporting leaders well in the drive to raise standards.
- Phonics (letters and the sounds they represent) is well taught, resulting in an improvement in reading.
- Standards in Key Stage 2 have improved over recent years.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs receive good support which enables them to progress well.
- Pupils behave well in and out of lessons and have good attitudes to learning. They feel safe and secure in school and there are good arrangements to keep them safe.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 24 lessons or parts of lessons, five of which were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read, examined work in books and talked to pupils about their learning.
- Inspectors, accompanied by pupils, toured the school to explore the breadth of the curriculum and the additional activities the school provides for pupils.
- Inspectors analysed data relating to pupils' attainment and progress. They also scrutinised the school's own documentation, including self-evaluation and documents relating to safeguarding and behaviour.
- The views of 80 parents and carers who responded to the online questionnaire (Parent View) were taken into account, and some were spoken to at the start of the school day.
- The views of 60 members of staff were gathered from the staff questionnaire.
- Meetings were held with pupils, senior and middle leaders, and governors. A telephone conversation was held with a representative from the local authority.

Inspection team

Janet Maul, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Anne Bark

Additional Inspector

Clive Robson

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Gillingham Primary School is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium (additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and for children in the care of the local authority) is low, and most qualify because they are eligible for free school meals.
- The school has specially resourced provision for 16 pupils with special educational needs in speech, language and communication. The pupils are based in two classes of eight, one in Key Stage 1 and one in Key Stage 2. The unit is staffed by teachers, speech therapists and teaching assistants. It is currently full.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is similar to the national average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is high due to the large number of pupils who attend the speech, language and communication unit.
- The proportion of pupils who come from minority ethnic backgrounds or who speak English as an additional language is low. Few pupils are from any single minority ethnic group.
- Since the last inspection, the school has appointed a new headteacher, deputy headteacher and Chair of the Governing Body.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that teaching is consistently good across the school by:
 - improving the quality of marking and the feedback given to pupils so they know what they need to do to improve
 - having high expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving
 - insisting on high standards of presentation in pupils' work.
- Raise attainment for the most-able pupils by:
 - ensuring that they are always given work that challenges them.
- Involve middle leaders in improving teaching by:
 - making sure that they fully understand the school's data and can use this information to drive improvements in achievement and teaching
 - increasing their responsibility for checking the quality of teaching and supporting colleagues to develop best practice.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Overall achievement is not good because pupils do not yet make consistently good progress across the school.
- Children enter the Reception class with skills that are usually lower than those found in children of the same age. They make good progress and, by the time they join Year 1, many have reached a good level of development.
- The Year 1 phonics screening check scores were high in 2013. Due to good teaching of early reading skills, they are predicted to be at a high level again this year.
- Previous underachievement in Key Stage 1 is being tackled by the school. Compared to recent years, better outcomes for pupils are anticipated this year, although a smaller proportion than average are predicted to achieve the highest levels.
- Standards in Key Stage 2 have improved steadily over the past few years. In 2013, the proportion of pupils making expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics exceeded national figures. However, the proportion of pupils who exceeded expected progress in mathematics and reading was below national figures.
- The proportion of pupils reaching the highest levels in the national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 is below average. The most-able pupils are not always challenged to achieve their best.
- In 2013, Year 6 pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium did not achieve as well as their classmates, and were on average behind by nine months in reading, 13 months in writing and 18 months in mathematics. The current picture is much better. The progress of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is closely tracked, and support given, and as a result, most pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium are attaining at a similar rate to their classmates.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are given good support and make good progress relative to their starting points. Pupils in the speech, language and communication unit also make good progress.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because not enough pupils have made consistently good progress over time.
- Good teaching in the Reception class means that children get off to a good start because the routines are clear and staff expectations are high.
- Phonics is well taught and reading throughout the school is now well organised, with pupils benefiting from well-planned guided reading lessons. Pupils read regularly and reading record books are shared with parents and carers.
- Work in lessons is set at the right level of difficulty for the majority of pupils. However, some teachers do not have high enough expectations of what their pupils can achieve, and work is not sufficiently challenging for the most-able pupils.
- Marking is variable in quality. Pupils do not always know how well they are doing and what they can do to improve further. Not all teachers give their pupils the opportunity to respond to written guidance and this slows pupils' progress.
- Teachers do not insist on high standards of presentation in pupils' work. As a result, too much work is untidy.
- Pupils are ably supported by a dedicated group of well-trained teaching assistants, who know when to give support and when to allow pupils to work on their own. Teaching assistants support pupils well and have a good rapport with the pupils.
- Teachers assess pupils' learning regularly and track their progress through the school. Any dips in progress are quickly identified and support is planned with the headteacher and assistant headteacher.

- Teachers set homework regularly and use it to support pupils' learning in the classroom. Parents and carers consider that the quantity is about right, and pupils said that it was not too easy or too difficult.
- Interesting displays around the school demonstrate the breadth of the curriculum. They are also used to celebrate pupils' work, and displays in classrooms are used to support learning.
- The quality of teaching in the speech, language and communication unit is good. The staff are skilled at adapting their teaching style to the varying and considerable needs of the pupils. Good use is made of specialist techniques to engage the pupils and help them to learn well. Pupils' progress is very well monitored.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs in the main school are also well taught and supported, and the school benefits from the expert advice shared by the unit.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils enjoy learning, with one pupil saying that school was 'as good as Saturday and Sunday'.
- Good behaviour starts in the Reception class where children learn and play purposefully together and behave well.
- All adults set a good example through polite and friendly behaviours with the result that pupils are polite to each other and the atmosphere in school is happy and positive.
- Lunchtime and playtime are safe and enjoyable for pupils, and there is a good level of supervision.
- Pupils enjoy learning and are keen to work hard. This is not always reflected in pride in their written work as teachers do not always insist on high standards of presentation.
- Pupils are proud of the school and think that they are well behaved and well looked after. These views are echoed by parents, carers and staff.
- Pupils in the speech, language and communication unit behave well and enjoy school. At lunchtime and playtime, pupils from the unit choose to sit and play with a range of children, reflecting the successful way that they feel fully part of the school.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils report that they feel safe, and parents, carers and staff agree that pupils are kept safe and are well looked after.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet statutory requirements.
- Safeguarding policies and procedures are clear and robust. All adults are checked to ensure they are suitable to work in school and staff receive regular child protection training.
- The school has suitable systems in place for recording and dealing with behavioural or bullying incidents or concerns. Pupils consider that bullying is rare.
- Attendance is good because pupils enjoy school and want to attend, and parents and carers value the work of the school. There is close liaison with home in the case of unexplained or persistent absence.
- There have a small number of short-term exclusions in recent years. Reintegration back into school has been well managed.
- Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe and spoke knowledgably about e-safety, 'stranger danger', and road and train safety.

The leadership and management require improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because low standards and progress in Key Stage 1 have only recently been addressed and the quality of teaching across the school is not consistently good.
- The school's information on pupils' achievement shows signs of an improving picture, but this is not yet fully established. The achievement of the most-able pupils remains a concern, with

the proportion of pupils who reach the higher levels being below average.

- The new headteacher, deputy headteacher and Chair of the Governing Body are ambitious for the school, and have firm plans in place to speed up the rate of pupils' progress.
- Poor teaching is now being robustly addressed, and the headteacher is working to ensure that the whole-school community has the highest aspirations for pupils. Teachers are given good-quality feedback on their work, which is helping them to improve. Pupils commented favourably on recent improvements in behaviour.
- At present, middle leaders are not fully involved in improving teaching and learning through checking the quality of teaching and then supporting their colleagues. Some do not have a detailed enough understanding of data on pupils' achievement to help them carry out this role.
- The headteacher, supported by the governing body, is effectively managing performance and setting appropriate targets for staff, linked to pupils' achievement.
- The school tracks the progress of pupils eligible for the pupil premium. The effect of the support is monitored and action taken if pupils' progress is not fast enough.
- Pupils enjoy learning about a wide variety of subjects. There are also plenty of visits and visitors to inspire pupils.
- Pupils' social and moral education is good, and the school ensures that pupils benefit from a variety of cultural experiences.
- The speech, language and communication unit is well led.
- Gillingham Primary School has good links with the neighbouring secondary school and transition arrangements are good, particularly for the most-vulnerable pupils.
- The government's new sports funding is being spent well. Part of the money has been spent on a sports coach who is helping teachers to improve their skills in teaching physical education. There are more sports and *sports* clubs for the pupils and this has resulted in an increase in participation. The school is proud of its success in sporting competitions, where it has won many trophies.
- The school has the confidence of the parents and carers, who are happy with the education their children receive. Staff are also very positive about the school and the changes that the new leadership team have made to improve the school.
- The local authority has given considerable support to the school, in particular supporting the headteacher as she has made changes, and this has helped the school to improve.

■ The governance of the school:

- Members of the governing body are aware of the progress made by the school since the previous inspection, but appreciate that there is a considerable amount of work to do to consolidate these gains. Governors are aware of the quality of teaching and they know what the school's leadership team is doing to make it even better. The governing body analyses data on pupils' performance thoroughly, asking probing questions where necessary. The governors manage the school's finances well and have plans in place to ensure financial stability over the next three years. The governors are involved in discussions to ensure that the pupil premium grant is spent well. They are involved in the performance management process and liaise closely with the headteacher to ensure that pay reflects performance. The governing body is very supportive of the school, but will also challenge the senior leadership team when appropriate. The governing body fulfils its statutory duties.

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	113666
Local authority	Dorset
Inspection number	431191

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	380
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Steven Lee
Headteacher	Sue Preston
Date of previous school inspection	30–31 May 2012
Telephone number	01747 823245
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