

Denton Community Primary School and Nursery

Acacia Road, Denton, Newhaven, BN9 0QJ

Inspection dates 16–17 April 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Since the last inspection, leaders have ensured that teaching and achievement have improved. Consequently, pupils now make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils are challenged well to make good progress in most lessons. Standards are rising. The teaching of phonics (the linking of sounds and letters) has improved and is now effective.
- There have been significant improvements in early years provision. Children now make good progress as a result of stimulating, well-taught activities. Outdoor provision is a strength.
- Pupils show positive attitudes to learning, feel very safe and behave well. Attendance has risen.
- Disadvantaged pupils are making increasingly good progress, so that the gaps between their attainment and that of their peers, both in school and nationally, are closing.
- The school provides high-quality care, particularly in supporting vulnerable pupils.
- Sport funding has had a positive impact upon the involvement of pupils in competitive sport.
- Leadership has strengthened significantly. Leaders at all levels constantly seek to improve the quality of education provided. Monitoring is rigorous.
- Governance has improved. Governors are well informed about the quality of teaching and make a significant contribution to driving improvement.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There are not enough planned opportunities for pupils to practise their writing skills in subjects across the curriculum.
- Subjects other than literacy and numeracy are not always covered in sufficient depth.
- Good practice in teachers' marking of writing is not transferred to the marking of other subjects.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 14 lessons, five of which were seen jointly with the headteacher.
- Inspectors looked closely at pupils' written work for the current school year. They listened to some pupils read.
- Meetings were held with a group of pupils, the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body, a representative of the local authority, and the school's senior and subject leaders.
- Inspectors took account of the 29 responses to the staff questionnaire and the 34 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. They also considered the school's own survey of parents' and carers' views, conducted in February 2015.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of school documents, including plans for improvement and records of checks on the quality of teaching. They also considered records of governing body meetings and those relating to behaviour, attendance, safeguarding and the systems used to check pupils' progress.

Inspection team

George Logan, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

David Webster

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Denton Community Primary School and Nursery is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The vast majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is close to the national average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium is above the national average. This is additional funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals or looked after by the local authority.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- In the early years, children of Nursery age attend part time. Children in Reception all attend full time.
- The school provides pre-school care through a recently introduced breakfast club on two mornings each week. This was reviewed as part of the current inspection.
- The current Nursery class, led by a qualified teacher and directly managed by the senior leaders of the school, opened in September 2014. Previously, Nursery provision had been offered on a fee-paying, privately run basis.
- Exceptionally, the school has two Reception classes in the current year. This is to cater for an increase in the number of Reception-aged children locally.
- There have been several recent changes to the school's leadership team, including the appointment of a new deputy headteacher.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop more opportunities for pupils to practise and develop their writing skills in a wider range of subjects across the curriculum.
- Ensure that current good practice in the marking of writing is carried over to the marking of other subjects.
- Ensure that pupils study subjects other than English and mathematics in sufficient depth and detail.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- School leaders have responded positively to the issues raised at the last inspection. Leadership is now more effective. The school has dealt systematically with the identified weaknesses and the pace of change has accelerated considerably.
- The leadership team has been strengthened following the appointment of a new deputy headteacher, early years leader and inclusion leader. The roles of key subject leaders have been developed well. Senior leaders promote positive attitudes and strong values. The current leadership team is in a good position to secure further improvement, as the culture leaders have created is promoting good teaching and ensuring that pupils behave well.
- Consistently high expectations of all staff have contributed significantly to the improvements achieved. Information about pupils' performance is used effectively, so that school leaders have comprehensive information about how well pupils are progressing.
- Key subject leaders have an accurate overview of the strengths and weaknesses of their subjects and are closely involved in supporting their colleagues. They understand the need to drive further improvement.
- The leadership and monitoring of teaching are effective and have contributed to the significant improvements in achievement. The quality of work in pupils' books has improved, and teachers' marking, particularly of writing, is mostly thorough. The procedures for setting targets to improve teachers' practice are well established.
- The school has made a positive start to implementing the new National Curriculum. However, while pupils learn all the expected subjects, the depth of coverage in subjects other than English and mathematics is sometimes limited. There is insufficient focus on developing pupils' writing skills through work in other subjects.
- The school has maintained its existing assessment system to provide detailed information about pupils' progress. It has reviewed potential new systems to secure a manageable approach to evaluating pupils' progress and intends that these will be in place by the beginning of the next school year.
- School leaders review the impact of pupil premium expenditure closely. They have identified that eligible pupils are now making increasingly rapid progress across the school.
- The school's evaluation of its effectiveness is accurate. School leaders know where further improvement is needed.
- The primary physical education and sport funding is used well to improve staff training and to provide specialist sports coaching. The school has a much higher level of participation – and success – in competitive sport than ever before. Pupils' involvement in after-school sports clubs has increased.
- The local authority has provided good support to improve teaching and boost achievement, particularly in driving the significant improvements in early years provision.
- The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is generally effective. The school promotes British values effectively through, for example, a visit by the local Member of Parliament and regular discussion with the older pupils about the forthcoming general election. As a result, pupils begin to understand their rights and responsibilities as British citizens and are prepared well for life in modern Britain. The school encourages pupils to have high aspirations for their future lives.
- The school endeavours to ensure equality of opportunity for all. Discrimination in any form is not tolerated.
- The school has established good links with most parents. Good links with other schools allow teachers to share good practice and also promote smooth transition as pupils move between schools.
- Statutory safeguarding arrangements meet requirements and are effective. All staff are trained to the expected levels.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are strongly supportive of the school. They are eager to undertake training to enhance their skills and understanding. Governors are better informed about the school's work. They are now closely involved in school improvement, monitor progress carefully and hold school leaders to account more effectively.
 - Governors evaluate the school's performance in relation to schools nationally and have a detailed understanding of the quality and impact of teaching. They have a good understanding of data about the performance of all groups of pupils. The management of teachers' performance has improved. Governors ensure that pay increases are securely linked to the outcomes of this process. They know

what the school is doing to tackle any underperformance.

- The governing body works with senior leaders to ensure that statutory duties are met, including those for keeping pupils safe.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning, particularly in the early years. Pupils are motivated and work hard.
- The school's records show that significant behavioural incidents are rare. No incidents of racist behaviour or bullying have been recorded since the last inspection. Exclusions have declined and pupils' behaviour is well managed. The playground is calm and effectively managed.
- Pupils are keen to take on responsibilities as buddies, play leaders, house captains and junior librarians.
- Occasionally, when the level of challenge is not well matched to pupils' ability, some find it difficult to sustain attention and this limits their learning.
- Attendance has continued to improve and is broadly average. Persistent absence has declined significantly.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Staff support pupils well if they feel threatened in any way. Pupils feel safe and are confident that staff will always take their concerns seriously. Risk assessments are thorough. Staff are fully checked prior to appointment.
- The school helps pupils to protect themselves from a range of risks. Staff ensure that pupils are alert to traffic risks. They focus frequently on the risks arising from internet abuse and cyber-bullying.
- Pupils are aware that bullying may take different forms. However, they feel that few instances occur and are confident that staff will always respond promptly.
- The quality of pastoral care is a significant strength. Case studies indicate the efforts made by the school to ensure that any difficulties faced by vulnerable pupils are tackled.
- Although few at present, those pupils who arrive early at school receive good care in the breakfast club.

The quality of teaching is good

- Significant improvements in teaching underpin rising standards and more rapid progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Teachers' expectations of the quality of pupils' written work have improved.
- Pupils learn rapidly when work provides challenge and engages their interest. For example, in mathematics, Year 6 pupils were learning to use written methods for division. All the planned activities were carefully matched to pupils' level of understanding, as were the teacher's questions. Pupils showed enthusiasm and persistence in tackling new problems. Pupils were keen to offer their ideas and opinions, in response to effective questioning by the teacher, exploring their understanding.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are supported well. Overall, they receive good help and guidance from learning support staff.
- Following comprehensive staff retraining, the teaching of phonics is now effective, with additional support available for older pupils who do not have sufficient understanding of sounds and letters. The teaching of reading ensures that pupils have the necessary technical skills and successfully extends their understanding of language.
- The school has implemented effective systems to check and improve pupils' progress. Teachers' marking of writing is thorough and indicates clearly what pupils have to do next. However, these strengths in marking are not always evident in other subjects. Targets are mostly used well to guide pupils' progress. Pupils mostly act upon teachers' comments.
- Homework contributes well to pupils' learning. There is a clear understanding as to the activities provided each week. These often involve an element of research or extended projects.

The achievement of pupils is good

- The significant improvements since the last inspection ensure that children in Nursery and Reception now achieve well. A much greater proportion of children achieved the expected good level of development in

2014 than in 2013 or previously. Good teaching and well-planned activities ensure that children are now well prepared to access the Year 1 curriculum.

- Despite low entry points to Year 1 prior to 2014, pupils' attainment by the end of Year 2 has been broadly average in the last three years. Increasingly effective teaching has ensured that progress in Years 1 and 2 has accelerated, so that standards continue to rise. While current Year 2 pupils are on track to attain broadly average standards, those in Year 1, with much higher entry points, are well placed to attain significantly higher standards by the end of Year 2.
- An above-average proportion of pupils attained the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check in 2014. This was a considerable increase on 2013, reflecting the school's successful efforts to improve teachers' understanding of phonics. Pupils now have a better grasp of the use of phonics.
- Standards by the end of Year 6 have been broadly average in the last three years. Although standards dipped in 2013, they rose significantly in 2014 and are on track to show further improvement in 2015.
- The school is working hard to address a legacy of underperformance which affects the work of some pupils. Many older pupils had a poor start to their education because of weak early years and Key Stage 1 provision. Standards are rising across the school, with the most rapid improvement currently in mathematics. Standards in reading are rising because of the better teaching of phonics.
- School data show that Year 6 pupils in 2013/14 made securely good progress. This is likely also to be the case in 2015. The proportion of pupils exceeding nationally expected progress has increased considerably, especially in reading and writing.
- The most-able pupils, typically a small group, achieve increasingly well. For example, while no pupils in Year 2 attained the higher Level 3 in any subject in 2013, several did so in 2014. Until the current year, Year 6 pupils have not attempted the very challenging Level 6 work. Several are now doing so, particularly in mathematics and reading.
- Disadvantaged pupils are making increasingly rapid progress. Consequently, the gaps in attainment between them and other pupils are narrowing. In 2014, the gap between the attainment of disadvantaged Year 6 pupils and others in the school was around three terms in mathematics. The gap in writing, at two terms, was narrower. Disadvantaged pupils slightly outperformed the others in reading.
- The gap between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally was around three terms in mathematics, and one-and-a-half terms in writing. Again, disadvantaged pupils attained more highly than all pupils nationally in reading. These gaps are reducing because the school rigorously evaluates the impact of additional support and rapidly modifies interventions.
- The school accurately identifies the needs of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. Many of these pupils have very complex needs. Overall, with good support, they make similar good progress to other pupils. The education provided successfully meets these pupils' needs.

The early years provision

is good

- Early years provision has improved significantly. The school now accommodates Nursery-aged children and, with the temporary additional Reception class, there are significantly more early years children than previously.
- As a result of good professional development by the local authority, and effective school leadership, early years practice is now consistently good. Close monitoring by senior leaders ensures that children benefit from high-quality experiences.
- Most children enter Nursery with skill levels broadly typical for their age. However, a significant proportion have weaknesses in speech and language which constrain the development of their language skills. Nursery provision focuses appropriately on promoting children's personal and social development and on addressing weaknesses in communication skills so that they can benefit from the full range of subjects on offer.
- In Reception, staff continue to focus on key basic skills, including language and mathematics. Recent improvements in phonics teaching successfully promote children's knowledge of sounds and letters and initial skills in reading.
- Children, including those who have special educational needs, are challenged to achieve well. Much improved, and now securely good, teaching in both Nursery and Reception ensures that children now make better progress. On leaving Reception, they are now well prepared for entry to Year 1. The proportion of children reaching levels typical for their age was well below average in 2013, but above the national average in 2014.
- Children have regular access to the spacious outdoor learning area, where the wide range of activities

contributes to their growing knowledge of the world. The outdoor learning environment, including the sunken garden, with its growing areas and opportunities for tree-climbing, has been creatively developed.

- The extensive outdoor area requires a high level of adult supervision when in use. Consequently, the number of adults indoors is significantly reduced. This sometimes reduces the frequency of interaction between adults and children and reduces the extent to which adults can intervene on any extended basis to talk to children and move their learning on.
- Children behave well. They have very positive attitudes to learning. They select resources with confidence and show good levels of independence.
- Children are safe and well looked after. The school engages well with parents prior to their children joining the school, and encourages their subsequent involvement in their children's learning.
- Staff undertake detailed checks and observations to provide accurate information about children's progress.
- The leadership and management of the early years provision are good. There has been a positive response to all recent training and the setting has adapted willingly to the added challenges of the significantly increased number of early years children in the current year.

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	114433
Local authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	462441

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	255
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	George Bishop
Headteacher	Caitlin Yapp
Date of previous school inspection	24 April 2013
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