

Gillingham Primary School

School Road, Gillingham, Dorset SP8 4QR

Inspection dates

7–8 June 2016

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders have not ensured that teaching is consistently good or better. It has taken longer than they expected to ensure that all teachers follow the school's policies and to eradicate weak teaching.
- Pupils do not make good progress in all classes and so do not reach the standards of which they are capable by the end of Year 6.
- The most able pupils do not make sufficiently rapid progress. Over the last year they have been given too much work that does not challenge them.
- The teaching of mathematics over time has not enabled pupils to make good progress.
- Some subject leaders do not have clearly defined roles and responsibilities. As a result, teaching and learning is not monitored as well as it should be to ensure that all pupils make rapid progress.
- Governors do not know whether pupils are making good progress, or provide leaders and external consultants with a balance of support and challenge.
- The governing body and senior leaders have not ensured that the school's website fully meets the government's statutory requirements and that parents receive up-to-date and accurate information.

The school has the following strengths

- Outcomes for children in the early years and pupils in Year 1 are good. This is due to strong leadership, effective teaching and good teamwork.
- Pupils who access the specialist base and those pupils who have an education, health and care (EHC) plan make rapid and sustained progress.
- The good teaching of phonics throughout the school enables pupils to read fluently and learn English quickly.
- Pupils, parents, staff and governors are proud of their school, and are determined to make it the best it can be. There is a shared sense of purpose in this caring, nurturing and tolerant environment.
- Pupils attend school regularly. Behaviour is good. The presentation of work in pupils' books is now of a good standard.
- There are effective arrangements to keep pupils safe. The school works closely with other services and agencies to support families when they need it.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that pupils make rapid progress in every class by ensuring that:
 - work is sufficiently challenging for the most able
 - mathematics is taught in a logical sequence so that pupils sufficiently grasp concepts before being moved onto the next one, and pupils have more opportunities to solve more complex mathematical problems in Years 5 and 6
 - all teachers follow the school’s policy on marking and feedback
 - teachers check what pupils already know and understand when planning topic work and use this information to ensure that work is sufficiently challenging.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership, management and governance by ensuring that:
 - leaders have clear roles and responsibilities and that their checks on teaching lead to improvements in pupils’ rates of progress in all subjects, particularly for disadvantaged pupils
 - governors increase their understanding of pupils’ progress and attainment so that they are able to challenge leaders and external consultants more effectively
 - the school’s website consistently complies with the government’s statutory requirements.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved. This should be undertaken as soon as possible, and before the end of this academic year.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement

- Since the previous inspection, leaders and managers have not secured consistently good or better teaching in all year groups. As a result, pupils' progress varies between classes.
- Although the training to address gaps in teachers' subject knowledge has contributed to improvements in teaching, the impact of this on pupils' attainment is not yet fully evident.
- While the new leaders of literacy, numeracy, phonics and early years have clearly defined roles and responsibilities, leaders of other subject areas do not, resulting in inconsistency in the quality of pupils' work.
- In topic work in particular, insufficient thought is given to planning activities that are suitably challenging so that pupils are working to the highest standard.
- Senior leaders, governors and staff are eager to make this a good school and morale is high. Teachers are motivated to improve their work and provide pupils with the right support to aid their learning. Other adults are equally keen to support pupils' learning. Pupils and their families are very proud of their school.
- New leaders of literacy, numeracy, phonics and early years have been effective in monitoring the work of teachers and other adults closely. They have successfully identified areas of strength and where improvements needed to be made, and have helped the headteacher to improve teaching through coaching, supporting and challenging their colleagues.
- Pupils experience a rounded curriculum that covers all the required areas of learning, including French. Pupils have produced good-quality three-dimensional drawings of buildings based on their 'shape' work in mathematics. They use simple circuits in design and technology, for example, giving 'Rudolf the reindeer' a shiny nose as part of a Christmas tree decoration. There is a good balance of extra-curricular activities, including residential and day visits to places of interest that link with work being undertaken in class.
- The curriculum is used effectively to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils have a good knowledge of different faiths and cultures, but say they would like more opportunities to meet, or be pen pals, with children from different backgrounds.
- Adults in the school are highly effective in promoting the British values of tolerance and democracy. School leaders listen carefully to the elected school council and give pupils responsibilities so that they can put into practice what they have learned. There are planned opportunities through the curriculum to reinforce pupils' awareness and the school also exploits current events, such as news about important changes in the law, to develop pupils' understanding.
- The physical education (PE) and sport premium funding has been used well. Training of staff has increased their confidence in teaching PE. As a result, more pupils are taking part in, and enjoying, sporting and physical activities. A dance teacher regularly visits the school and a sports coach runs clubs three to four days a week. These popular clubs include tennis and cricket. Gifted and talented pupils have regularly attended indoor athletics clubs and achieved successes there.
- The headteacher has ensured that the pupil premium funding is used wisely to support eligible pupils. However, while the gaps in achievement between these pupils and others are closing, she is aware that more needs to be done to ensure that they reach even higher standards.
- Through monitoring and self-evaluation, the school leaders had identified that more early support was needed for pupils who were struggling with their learning. They have tackled this by utilising staff from the special support base to work with pupils throughout the year groups, with a focus on developing and enhancing pupils' phonics skills. They have also invested in electronic software that, with specialist adult support, is helping these pupils to make rapid progress in their phonics knowledge and understanding.
- **The governance of the school**
 - The governing body has changed since the previous inspection in personnel and structure. Governors have an increased presence in the school and judge for themselves the effectiveness of work that has been done against the targets in the school's action and improvement plans. However, they are not yet discharging all of their strategic duties effectively. They have not ensured that the required information about themselves is published on the school's website. The information on the website about pupil premium funding is also incorrect. Governors had not checked and challenged the pupil premium leader and the headteacher on the accuracy of the pupil premium statement against the Department for Education's published data about the school.

- Very recently, several new governors have been appointed and they are currently undertaking appropriate training to equip them for their new roles and responsibilities. One newly appointed governor has already started to review the school’s website and has exciting ideas to make it more user-friendly and informative.
- Following changes to the structure of the governing body, there is now better communication between committees and record-keeping has improved.
- The governing body ensures that teachers’ pay reflects the quality of their teaching.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. All safeguarding documents, processes and procedures are appropriate, recorded clearly and effectively applied. The designated safeguarding lead and deputy leaders work closely together and with external agencies to ensure that pupils are kept safe. School staff are rigorous in their pursuit of any safeguarding issues. Case files are appropriately organised and explain the chronological process of actions taken and who has been involved. Regular checks have been made by the nominated governor to ensure that the school’s policies are effective and properly implemented. Vetting procedures for new staff are robust. The school has recently reviewed its e-safety policy to improve the identification of risks from the internet and the use of social media; a trained and accredited member of staff has been nominated to lead on this important area and a new scheme of work has been introduced that is informed by the latest guidance. All staff are well trained in safeguarding including specific aspects such as female genital mutilation. They are kept up to date with any changes to legislation or government guidance. Staff help to ensure that pupils are kept safe from potential risks of radicalisation, extremism and child exploitation.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- Despite some improvements in the quality of teaching over the last two years, pupils have not made sufficiently rapid progress to reach the standards that should be expected of them at the end of Year 2 and Year 6.
- Over time, mathematics has not been taught effectively, and this remains a weakness in the school. This is because the activities planned by some teachers are not based on a logical sequence that builds on pupils’ prior learning. Too often pupils are moved on to a new concept before they have sufficiently mastered their current work. In Years 5 and 6 in particular, pupils do not have enough opportunities to solve more complex mathematical problems. Leaders have introduced new schemes of work and resources to support the teaching of the new national curriculum. These have been highly effective in helping pupils at relatively low levels of attainment but do not support rapid progress for other pupils.
- Not all staff use the school’s marking policy to check pupils’ work and provide advice on how to improve it. Where staff follow the policy more carefully, pupils’ work is of a higher quality and their progress is more rapid and sustained.
- Teachers do not give the most able pupils enough time to do the suitably challenging work they have planned for them. Too often, they are asked to answer numerous questions that repeat skills or understanding they have already acquired, before they can move on to more challenging activities. This wastes valuable learning time.
- Pupils enjoy topic work, with planned themes in subjects such as science, history and geography. However, teachers do not sufficiently check what pupils already know and understand when introducing new topics. Pupils of all abilities reported that this frustrates them as they are sometimes asked to do work they have completed before, particularly for homework.
- The teaching of phonics has improved throughout the school, which is helping all pupils improve their reading and writing skills.
- In the early years, Year 1, and where pupils have an education, health and care plan, there is evidence of high-quality dialogue between the different adults working with each pupil. This high-quality sharing of information enables adults to know what each pupil has achieved and what the next steps are in the individual’s learning. It reduces the possibility of unnecessary repetition of work, or conflicting advice being given to the pupil. Invariably, pupils respond positively to the comments made by the adults and their work quickly and securely improves.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The school council plays an important role in making a difference to the school. The elected members have been responsible for a good variety of improvements to the school's provision. They reported that they are very pleased with the new play equipment that pupils have helped to choose.
- Pupil, parents and staff reported that bullying is rare and that it is swiftly and effectively dealt with. They noted that pupils are kept safe and that they feel safe. Inspection evidence and school records confirm this view.
- The breakfast and after-school clubs enable parents to be confident that their children are being cared for in a safe learning environment. They appreciate these opportunities and they are increasingly popular.
- High-quality and efficient engagement with parents and other agencies helps to keep pupils safe. The school provides excellent support for families when they need it most.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. It is excellent in assemblies and at lunchtimes.
- Pupils have a very well-developed sense of right and wrong. They understand the consequence of poor behaviour.
- The school is an open-minded and cohesive place. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated. For example, discussions between staff and pupils in a religious education lesson encouraged pupils to challenge prejudiced views.
- Pupils generally enjoy their learning and show positive attitudes. Those who spoke with the inspectors commented positively on the amount of sports that are available to them and the pleasure they get from the experiments they have been doing in science. Pupils are now taking greater care to present their work to a higher standard.
- Even when pupils are not sufficiently challenged, most get on with the work set for them without any fuss. There are rare occasions when pupils go off-task, with some low-level disruption that is not quickly addressed by adults.

Outcomes for pupils

require improvement

- Overall, pupils' progress over time remains too variable. In 2015, a lower proportion of Year 6 pupils than nationally made the expected progress in reading and mathematics. A much lower proportion than nationally made more than expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Over the last year, the most able pupils have not been given enough work that is sufficiently challenging. In numeracy, they have spent too long repeating calculations that they have already mastered. In literacy, they have not been given enough guidance to make rapid progress in their writing.
- The school's assessment information and pupils' work show that pupils currently in the school have been making more rapid progress over the last two years. Last year, the vast majority of pupils in each year group made the expected progress by the end of the year. This year, more pupils are making better than expected progress. However, the improved rates of progress have not been sufficient to enable pupils in Year 6 to catch up on previous underachievement.
- Achievement gaps between pupils entitled to the pupil premium and other pupils are reducing. School leaders are aware that more needs to be done and the gaps for the oldest pupils and those who joined the school after Year 4 are too wide. They have put extra support in place to help these pupils improve their work. As a result, these pupils are now making the expected progress, although the school is aware that their progress needs to be accelerated if the gaps in their attainment, compared with other pupils nationally, are to continue to close.
- Pupils who use the specialist resource base, and those pupils who have an education, health and care plan, make rapid and sustained progress from their starting points.
- Pupils with English as an additional language make swift progress in developing their communication skills and understanding. They quickly become fluent in English due to the high-quality and intensive support they are given.
- The proportion of pupils who meet the standards in the phonics screening check, at the end of Year 1,

remains above that found nationally. Disadvantaged pupils performed even better in these checks than their classmates in 2015. Pupils throughout the school continue to develop their reading skills and enjoy reading.

- This year, pupils throughout the school have made rapid progress in improving their writing, particularly in Year 1. They are editing their work more frequently following the good-quality advice given to them by adults. This is ensuring that they are learning from their mistakes, and not settling for second best when improvements can be made. Presentation in pupils' books has also greatly improved. Pupils are taking more care about how they form the individual letters in words, keeping the spaces between words regular and writing on the lines provided in books.

Early years provision

is good

- Good leadership and management continue to ensure that the provision for children enables them to make good progress and achieve well. The additional funding for the very few children entitled to it is used appropriately so that they do as well as their peers.
- Children start in the early years with skills that are below those typically expected for their age. The proportion of children who achieve a good level of development in the early years foundation stage is well above that seen nationally. Almost all children are well prepared to start Year 1 by the time they leave the Reception Year. Children with complex learning difficulties have also made at least good progress from their starting point.
- Children who join the school with little language skill rapidly develop communication skills because they benefit from the same high-quality phonics teaching as their classmates. All children also make rapid progress in their written work because staff help them to apply their phonics learning when writing.
- All adults work closely together to support and inspire the children. The assessment of children's development is regular, rigorous and precise. They correctly identify the skills that individual children need to develop and use this information to plan activities to meet these needs well.
- Records, including photographs, of what children can do are carefully kept in 'learning journals'. The school has also invested in an online electronic recording system. This is used to share with families what children have achieved. This is available to parents daily. The majority of parents review these records online on a regular basis and, increasingly, are adding comments to the records and providing their own evidence of their children learning from everyday activities undertaken at home.
- The leaders have created an attractive environment where children can enjoy their learning. Although much is done to help children understand their own community, more could be done to improve children's understanding of cultural diversity within the United Kingdom and globally at an earlier age.
- Safeguarding checks are effective and detailed, and help contribute to children feeling happy and safe.

School details

Unique reference number	113666
Local authority	Dorset
Inspection number	10012356

This inspection 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	386
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Steven Lee
Headteacher	Sue Preston
Telephone number	01747 823 245
Website	www.gillinghamprimary.dorset.sch.uk
Email address	office@gillinghamprimary.dorset.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	22–23 May 2014

Information about this school

- This is a larger than average-sized primary school.
- More pupils join the school after Year 4 than is usual. In the current Year 6, nearly one third of pupils completed Year 2 in another school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage. A small proportion of pupils are at the very early stages of learning English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is steadily increasing and is broadly average. The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children in the care of the local authority.
- There is a specialist resource base within the school for up to 16 pupils with speech, language and communication difficulties. This provision is led and managed by the school, but admissions are managed by the local authority.
- The school runs a breakfast club and an after-school club.
- Since the previous inspection, there have been significant changes to the governing body, leadership team and teaching staff.
- At the start of the inspection, the school's website did not provide all the required information about the governance of the school or have the correct details in its statement about the outcomes for pupils entitled to the pupil premium.
- In 2015, the school did not meet the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors visited classes and carried out joint observations with senior leaders. The inspectors scrutinised pupils' work in numeracy, literacy, phonics, design and technology, French and science, and they reviewed pupils' topic books.
- The inspectors observed pupils throughout the school day and listened to some of them read.
- Discussions were held both formally and informally with pupils about their experiences in school.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, subject leaders and members of the governing body. An inspector held a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority.
- During the inspection the large majority of pupils in Year 6 were on a residential trip to Okehampton.
- A wide range of documentary evidence was considered, including records relating to safeguarding, the impact of teaching on learning, the curriculum and assessment information.
- The inspectors took account of the views from pupils, staff and parents directly, and from the completed online questionnaires.

Inspection team

Steffi Penny, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Marcia Northeast	Ofsted Inspector
Claire Mirams	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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