

Palatine Primary School

Palatine Road, Durrington, Worthing, BN12 6JP

Inspection dates 16–17 January 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school. Select

- In relation to their skills and understanding when they start school, pupils make good progress by the time they leave at the end of Year 6 and achieve well. They make particularly good progress in the key skills of literacy and numeracy.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress, which prepares them well for moving into Year 1.
- Teaching is good and some is outstanding. Teachers plan their lessons well and make sure all pupils are involved in their learning through the use of a wide range of strategies.
- Pupils thoroughly enjoy their learning. Their behaviour is excellent as a result of highly effective support from staff in lessons and around the school.
- Pupils say they feel happy and safe at the school, which is confirmed by the school's own records.
- As a result of a continuous focus on improvement by senior leaders, including governors, the quality of teaching and learning, and pupils' achievement, have improved since the previous inspection and continue to improve.
- Leadership and management are good. Senior leaders, including governors, know the school well and successfully act on what is needed to secure further improvement.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- On a few occasions pupils' small steps in learning are not checked thoroughly enough. Consequently teachers do not always provide enough challenging work for the more able pupils.
- There are not enough training opportunities for staff in the use of new technologies which would make the curriculum more exciting.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed ten lessons, seeing ten teachers. Four of the lessons were observed jointly with the senior leadership team and every class was visited.
- A meeting was held with a small group of pupils. Meetings were also held with the senior leadership team, others with posts of responsibility, the Vice-chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority.
- The lead inspector took account of 13 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View), the results of the school's own regular parental surveys and 34 staff questionnaires.
- The inspectors observed the school's practice and looked at a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement planning, data on pupils' progress, documents used by leaders to monitor and evaluate the school's work, governing body documentation and records relating to attendance, behaviour and safeguarding.
- An inspector also listened to a group of older pupils reading.

Inspection team

James Bowden, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Sandra Teacher

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Palatine Primary School provides for children with a wide range of special educational needs including moderate to severe learning difficulties, profound and multiple learning difficulties and autistic spectrum disorders. Many pupils also have associated medical and mobility needs. All pupils have a statement of special educational needs.
- Pupils are generally taught in same age-group classes. However, at certain times in their education, pupils with very particular needs are taught alongside others with similar needs, particularly those who have profound and multiple learning difficulties and complex autistic spectrum disorders.
- The school provides an outreach service for mainstream schools within the local authority.
- Currently, the large majority of pupils are boys. Most pupils are of White British heritage. A few come from a range of other ethnic backgrounds. A few are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils (40%) known to be eligible for pupil premium, which provides additional government funding to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, is well above the national average.
- A new headteacher was appointed at Easter 2012.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching by:
 - sharpening the quality of checking of pupils' progress in lessons to help in planning work to support pupils' next steps in learning
 - ensuring that work for more able pupils is always hard enough.
- Provide more effective training for staff in the use of new technologies so that they can make the curriculum more exciting.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Progress is good from the start of the Early Years Foundation Stage until the end of Year 6, and pupils achieve well, irrespective of their individual special educational needs or disabilities. All are prepared well for the next stage of their education.
- Over the last three years the proportion of pupils doing well in English and mathematics has increased and the rate of progress of these pupils is above that found in similar schools.
- There are no significant differences in the rates of progress made by boys or girls, different ethnic groups or those supported by pupil premium funding. Pupils eligible for free school meals achieve as well as others. Those pupils from ethnic backgrounds, other than White British, and those looked after by the local authority also achieve equally as well as others.
- All pupils make good progress in improving their communication skills, for example in using sign and gesture, and in using switches. In reading, the sounding out letters to recognise words is used to good effect to accelerate gains in reading skills.
- Pupils make significant strides in improving their personal development, becoming more confident as they move through the school to tackle tasks independently. Those with profound and multiple learning difficulties and severe learning difficulties learn how to take turns and make choices. A key strength underpinning this good progress is how well teachers and other adults work together to support pupils' learning.
- Pupils typically make good progress. In a French lesson, older pupils were successful in learning the days of the week and putting them in the correct order. In addition, they were able to follow simple instructions in French. In a communication skills lesson, older pupils make good progress in choosing their favourite rhyming songs and joining in singing and signing with the staff supporting them. All later chose an independent activity to follow, which added to their involvement and enjoyment.
- The school's detailed records are effective in supporting pupils' learning and progress, and confirm that pupils make good progress over time. Clear and achievable individual targets are set and reviewed regularly. This enables the school to assess the progress being made towards them and to decide if any extra support is required, including that from other professionals.
- Occasionally, the progress of more able pupils during a particular lesson slows because work for them is not challenging enough.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching across the school promotes good learning for all pupils, whatever their ability, gender, ethnicity or particular special educational needs. Evidence shows that has been the case over a period of years. There are good opportunities in all lessons for pupils to practise and improve their key skills including communication, such as through signing, the use of visual communication cards and gestures.
- Evidence of the priority given to the use of gestures was abundantly clear in lessons for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties who were exploring different hot and cold objects and different sounds. Careful assessment was made by staff of reactions and willingness to touch, thus making sure pupils were making progress towards their specific individual targets.
- Opening activities are used well and motivate pupils effectively. Learning intentions are made clear and throughout most lessons staff ask questions effectively, thus checking how well pupils are improving their understanding. This was clear in a lesson for older pupils who were learning the sounds that letters make in order to recognise words and where questioning was used throughout the lesson to check individual's understanding. In the same lesson the more able pupils went on to write the words being discussed.
- Teachers plan their lessons well and generally set demanding tasks. In a science lesson for younger pupils, stimulating and imaginative resources resulted in them making rapid progress in

experimenting with, and exploring, different materials. In an Early Years Foundation Stage lesson, good progress was made in numeracy as children worked both inside and outside the classroom.

- Although the teaching has improved since the previous inspection, there are instances when the work is not set at the right level for the more able pupils. The quality of checking pupils' progress in lessons is not always sharp enough. So, planning to support pupils' next steps in learning is not as effective as it could be. Reading books for some of the stronger readers, for example, are not always pitched at a high enough level so as to improve reading skills even further.
- Pupils told the lead inspector they enjoyed lessons and that teachers helped them. The majority of parents also feel their children are taught well.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils arrive at the school in a positive frame of mind. Lots of smiling faces and friendly greetings from staff set a positive tone for the day. Pupils remain contented throughout the day because they enjoy their learning. Pupils are friendly and courteous. At the end of the day smiling faces remain the norm, along with fond farewells to staff.
- Unauthorised absence is very low and there have been no recent permanent exclusions or instances where pupils have not been allowed to go to school for a short period because of poor behaviour.
- Well-established routines throughout the day and insistence on high standards result in excellent behaviour in lessons and around the school. At break times pupils play well together and during lunch chat with one other and adults supervising them. In a whole school morning assembly, all sang and signed cheerily as they wished two pupils a 'happy birthday'.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good, especially where teachers enliven learning with a variety of well-chosen activities and tasks. In a music lesson exploring rhythm, pupils relished the opportunity to use a range of small percussion instruments. Where the odd frustration arises, staff deal with pupils in a calm and purposeful way, thus ensuring the learning of others is not disrupted. In lessons where teachers do not make full use of new technology, although behaviour remains good, pupils show less enthusiasm.
- In lessons seen, there were no incidents of poor behaviour because pupils cooperated well with one another and the staff. In a lesson focusing on developing pupils' awareness of road safety, all stayed on task whilst awaiting their turn to practise crossing a road with varying levels of danger set up by the teacher.
- Almost all parents who responded to Parent View and the school's latest survey agreed that the school keeps their children safe. Staff also confirm this view. Pupils too say they are safe and know they have to tell an adult if they have a problem. A group of pupils told the lead inspector that they enjoyed coming to school and got on well together.
- The excellent behaviour seen during the inspection is endorsed by the views of parents and staff.

The leadership and management are good

- Strong leadership ensures that all staff are committed to ensuring the best outcomes possible for all pupils.
- The new headteacher and her senior leaders are effective in driving improvement. They check how well the school is doing and use this information to decide key areas for improving overall provision at the school. The Early Years Foundation Stage is well led and managed.
- As a result of senior leaders checking the quality of teaching and learning, teachers are set targets to improve the quality of their work and recommendations are made as to whether they

should be given more responsibilities or have more training opportunities.

- Achievement and the quality of teaching and learning have been improved since the previous inspection. The introduction of a formal approach to teaching pupils the sounds that letters and blends make has already led to improvements in pupils' literacy skills and, because of added focus across the curriculum, pupils' numeracy skills are also improving.
 - The curriculum, matching that taught in mainstream schools, makes sure everyone has the chance to succeed. However, staff have not received enough training in the use of new technologies to make the curriculum as exciting for pupils as it could be.
 - The school's commitment to equality has ensured all pupils, including those whose circumstances have made them vulnerable, make good progress in their learning and personal development. This is particularly evident in pupils' good overall spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Relationships throughout the school are good, with no evidence of any occurrences of discrimination.
 - The school works closely with parents, which is evident from their positive responses to Parent View and the results of the school's own regular parental surveys.
 - The school is highly effective in working with other professionals to support the needs of pupils in the school and supporting other mainstream schools.
 - The local authority knows the school well. It provides light touch support, enabling the school to sustain its focus on continuing improvement.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is an effective and supportive, yet critical, friend of the school. It holds the school to account for its performance and pupils' achievements through, for example, the newly-established working parties that visit the school. It has a good knowledge of how well pupils are achieving, as well as the impact on progress of quality of teaching. It checks the performance of the headteacher and how well the senior leaders check staff performance and understands the link between performance and pay. In addition, it ensures national requirements are met and safeguarding procedures are fully in place, some governors having undertaken training in safe recruitment. The finance committee oversees the allocation and use of pupil premium, which is being spent to ensure high staff/pupil ratio, provide modified materials or equipment and additional opportunities, such as attending summer camps. As a result, the progress of those receiving the funding is in line with other pupils in the school.
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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	126159
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	402383

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	112
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Patrica Peal
Headteacher	Catriona Goldsmith
Date of previous school inspection	17–18 March 2010
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