

Bridport Primary School

St Andrew's Road, Bridport, Dorset, DT6 3BJ

Inspection dates 11–12 November 2014

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Until recently leaders have not taken effective steps to ensure that all pupils achieve well.
- Leaders have been too generous in the way they have judged the school's performance. This means they do not have an accurate view of the school's work.
- Governors have not checked the school's work with sufficient rigour. As a result, over time they have not held leaders firmly to account.
- Subject and middle leaders are relatively new to their roles. They have had limited impact in improving the quality of teaching.
- Progress in mathematics has been too slow in the past. Consequently attainment in mathematics by the end of Year 6 has not been high enough.
- The gap between the achievement of pupils supported by additional funding and others has been too wide.
- Standards in spelling, handwriting and the presentation of pupils' work not yet high enough.
- Recent work to improve the quality of teaching has not had sufficient time to ensure pupils make consistently good progress. Not all pupils have attained well in all subjects.
- Teachers do not always plan activities that are sufficiently challenging, especially for the most-able pupils.
- Behaviour is not consistently good. Some pupils do not settle to their work and this distracts others from their learning. Some pupils do not respond promptly enough to their teachers' instructions and requests and this interrupts their learning.

The school has the following strengths

- The early years provision is good and children make a positive start to school. They settle quickly and happily into school routines.
- Most pupils in Key Stage 1 are making better progress than previously. This is leading to their rising attainment.
- The provision for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is well managed. This is resulting in better progress for these pupils.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. All pupils say that they feel very safe in school.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed a range of teaching across the school, some in conjunction with the headteacher. In addition, they made a number of short visits to classrooms, the dining hall and the playground.
- Meetings were held with pupils, members of the governing body and school leaders. The lead inspector consulted with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 83 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). They met informally with parents before the start of the school day. They also took account of the 38 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents, including the school's improvement plans. They examined information on pupils' current progress, the governing body minutes and the plans for the use of the school sport fund.
- The inspectors heard pupils read, talked to them in classrooms and evaluated samples of their work.

Inspection team

Sandra Woodman, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Roy Blatchford	Additional Inspector
Julia Coop	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is larger than the average-sized primary school. Pupils are organised in 14 classes, each of which are based on a single age-group.
- The very large majority of pupils have a White British background.
- All children in the early years attend full time.
- The school provides extended care for pupils with a before-school club.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is below average. This is additional government funding provided to give extra support to those pupils who are eligible for free school meals or children who are looked after. Currently, there are no children on roll who are looked after.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is above average.
- The current headteacher took up her post in February 2012.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement by improving the quality of teaching so that it is good or better by ensuring that all teachers:
 - develop the ability to provide the right level of challenge for different groups of pupils, especially the most-able
 - raise their expectations of pupils' presentation of their work and their handwriting
 - teach spelling skills systematically so that pupils become accomplished spellers
 - extend their skills in managing behaviour so that the learning for pupils flows smoothly and without interruption.
- Increase the effectiveness of leadership and management by making sure that:
 - all leaders judge the school's performance rigorously and accurately
 - subject leaders and middle leaders evaluate sharply the impact of their actions to improve teaching
 - governors check systematically the impact of improvement plans for themselves in order to hold leaders to account more effectively.
- An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management

require improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because leaders have not secured enough effective teaching to enable all pupils to make consistently good progress.
- Since the previous inspection, considerable changes in the school's leadership and staffing led to a degree of turbulence which slowed progress for a time. Now that staffing issues have been settled, the pace of school improvement is increasing.
- Leaders, including governors, have a clear understanding of the issues relating to the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. However, their judgement of the school's performance in comparison to other schools nationally, has sometimes been too generous and therefore not sufficiently rigorous.
- Firm steps have been taken recently to strengthen the quality of the teaching, particularly in mathematics, and these have increased progress rates. Together with improvements to teachers' marking and pupils' attendance, this demonstrates the school's capacity to improve further.
- The dedicated headteacher has the complete confidence of staff. All are committed to making the necessary changes to raise achievement as verified by the highly positive staff questionnaires.
- Over the past year leaders have introduced more extensive checks on pupils' attainment and progress. As a result, teachers are being held to account more robustly for their pupils' progress. Increases in teachers' pay are based on good performance.
- Subject and middle leaders, some relatively new to their roles, have introduced new ways to improve teaching. So far they have had insufficient time to evaluate the impact of their work and their contribution to school improvement has been limited.
- Leadership of both the early years and special educational needs is effective because teaching is well-targeted at what pupils need to learn. Provision for pupils supported by additional funding is proving successful in closing any remaining gaps in attainment. This demonstrates the school's strong commitment to promoting equality for all pupils and avoiding discrimination.
- The range of subjects, together with visits and after-school clubs enrich pupils' learning experiences. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. Pupils are prepared for life in modern Britain through activities such as those that contribute to the Unicef 'Rights Respecting School' initiative.
- Checks on the use of the school sport fund show that pupils are more active and taking part in a wider variety of sports. Staff have the opportunity to work alongside specialists to improve their skills to help sustain these activities.
- Parents are very positive about all aspects of the school's work. They are very appreciative of the work the school does to help children and their families become more involved in their learning.
- All statutory requirements for safeguarding are met and systems are checked rigorously. Training for staff in areas such as child protection is up-to-date.
- The local authority has provided 'light touch' support for the school. This has not been extensive enough to help the school make the rapid improvements needed to the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have restructured their work which is now clearly focused on relevant priorities. They are supportive of school leaders, and very committed to moving the school forward and fulfilling their statutory duties. They know how the performance of staff is being managed and that it is linked to pay progression. They undertake relevant training, including some provided by the local authority. They have developed good skills for analysing information about the performance of pupils. However, they have not used their knowledge robustly enough when holding leaders to account, and have not always had an accurate view of the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. Neither have their checks on the school's work been systematic enough for them to judge accurately the impact of the school's improvement planning.
 - Governors check safeguarding procedures in school regularly, and are rigorous in ensuring that staff have the appropriate training.
 - Governors manage the school's finances effectively. They know how additional funds are used to support disadvantaged pupils and develop sporting activities. They know about the impact funding is having on pupils' achievement and their participation levels.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

require improvement

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Most pupils have positive attitudes to learning but some are slow to settle and do not respond quickly enough to teachers' instructions. Pupils say that this distracts them and their teachers from the learning.
- Pupils understand the system of sanctions for managing their behaviour. However, behaviour is not always managed in a way which pupils find encouraging, and as a result, they are not all always motivated to try their best.
- Pupils are polite, friendly and co-operative, around the school and in the playground. Relationships are positive and secure because pupils are well known to staff. The school fosters good relations and tackles discrimination effectively.
- Pupils say that they are listened to and that the adults take their views seriously. They enjoy the wide range of responsibilities on offer to them, such as sports leaders and school councillors.
- The school's behaviour log shows a significant reduction in incidents of poor behaviour. The very few pupils with poor behaviour are benefiting from carefully planned support. This is helping to promote acceptable behaviour, and is successfully eliminating the need for exclusions.
- The school has taken rigorous steps to promote regular attendance and punctuality. As a result attendance has improved and is currently above the national average.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say that they feel very safe in school. Almost all parents who completed the online questionnaire agree.
- Pupils are clear about what constitutes bullying and the different forms it can take, such as cyber-bullying or racist name-calling. They say that instances of such bullying are very rare. Any occasional unkind behaviour is quickly and effectively sorted out by the adults.
- Pupils have good strategies for keeping themselves safe, for example through 'street-wise' training, 'Bikeability' and regular e-safety training.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- In the past there has not been enough consistently good teaching to ensure that all groups of pupils made good progress.
- Although teaching has improved recently, teachers do not always plan sufficiently challenging activities. Sometimes the most-able pupils are not stretched to the full and could achieve more.
- Teachers have not taught spelling and handwriting skills systematically enough throughout the school. This hinders pupils' ability to write fluently. Teachers do not always insist on high standards of presentation in pupils' work.
- Marking and feedback to pupils about how well they are doing has improved and is more effective than previously. Pupils appreciate teachers' guidance and their helpful comments, and act promptly to make improvements to their work. This is helping to accelerate their progress.
- Teachers use their subject knowledge to good effect, devising activities which build on pupils' previous knowledge. They check their pupils' understanding of what they are taught, and frequently re-shape tasks to aid progress. Pupils say that the teaching is getting better all the time.
- Classrooms have stimulating displays and resources that support learning well. Generally, pupils are keen to learn. However, staff do not always take advantage of pupils' motivation to maximise their learning.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work effectively with disabled pupils and those with special educational needs as well as those supported by additional funding. The work set for these pupils is well targeted and ensures these groups make better progress.
- Teachers are keen to improve their practice. They readily engage in training activities, such as that designed to help them improve their teaching in mathematics. This is leading to faster rates of progress for pupils across the school.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' achievement requires improvement because not all groups of pupils have made good enough progress over time. This has been particularly the case in mathematics across Key Stage 2. However, the school has now addressed this legacy of underachievement and progress is improving for most groups of pupils.

- Attainment in all subjects rose in 2014 and most notably in Key Stage 1. However, standards at the end of Year 6 for the most-able pupils were not in line with national expectations in all subjects.
- When writing, pupils do not always demonstrate the necessary range of skills in spelling. Pupils do not always take pride in the presentation of their work and weak handwriting skills hold them back.
- The most-able pupils are not challenged consistently by the work they are given. Sometimes a lack of opportunity to apply their skills to the full with more challenging work impedes their progress and they fail to achieve as well as they could.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress on the whole because of the carefully planned support they receive. They are stretched to reach their potential by well targeted activities.
- Pupils supported by the additional government funding have tended to achieve less well. By the end of Year 6 their attainment in all subjects had, until recently, been a year behind their classmates and others nationally. However, they are now making much faster progress across the school and any remaining gaps have reduced to less than a term for current groups.
- In 2014, Year 1 pupils attained above average in the Year 1 phonics screening check. This rising trend reflects a greater emphasis on teaching the sounds letters make (phonics). Older pupils speak with enthusiasm about different authors and demonstrate a clear understanding of what they read.
- More pupils, especially girls, are participating in a wider range of sports and activities supported by the school sport funding. Pupils enjoy competing in new sports such as cross-country running, golf and hockey.

The early years provision

is good

- Children settle into the Reception class quickly and happily because their transition into school is managed well. Routines and expectations are quickly established so that children soon become self-assured and ready to learn.
- Often from starting points that are below those typical for their age, children make good progress. They catch up quickly, especially in their personal development and speaking and listening skills. The large majority start Year 1 as confident learners, demonstrating the skills and understanding expected for their age.
- Teaching is good because teachers provide a skilful blend of interesting activities and resources for children. Children enjoy the 'Let's Explore' sessions when they follow their own interests and discover things for themselves.
- Most groups of children achieve well. They are keen to learn and behave well.
- Phonics is taught effectively and children learn to read quickly. Sometimes teachers do not link the sounds to children's writing and spelling activities promptly enough. Occasionally the most-able are not stretched to the full by the activities on offer.
- Links with parents have improved and they are involved well in their children's learning. Workshops about reading ensure that parents can continue helping with their children's learning at home.
- Leaders ensure that the children in their care are kept safe, and welfare arrangements are very effective. Staff are well trained and know precisely what needs to be done to improve the learning for groups of children and individuals.

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	113660
Local authority	Dorset
Inspection number	449153

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	413
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sarah Case
Headteacher	Debbie Brown
Date of previous school inspection	19–20 May 2011
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